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Notes and News 113
India and the Address 116
Apologies for Repression 116
The Press in India, by Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E. 118
The Week in Parliament 119
India in the British Press: The Policy of Repression 119
India in Parliament:
Sir W. Wedderburn's Amendment to the Address 120
Mr. Herbert Roberts's Amendment... 122
Mr. Samuel Smith's Motion ... 125
Advertisements 128

NOTES AND NEWS.

ON Friday last, after a nine hours' sitting, and at a time when Lord George Hamilton and Sir Richard Webster were deprecating in the House of Commons any remarks which might hamper the course of the Government of India, the first of the Bills which are to revolutionise the law of sedition was rushed through the Viceroy's Council at Calcutta. Our columns have during the past few weeks borne testimony to the weight of opinion among all classes of society in India which is hostile to the new legislation, and on Friday morning last we received the following telegram from a correspondent in Calcutta:—"A great public meeting, the largest ever known in Calcutta, has just been held to protest against the Sedition Bill. The meeting was opened by the Sheriff, the Hon. Mr. Arthur, and attended by nearly four thousand people who packed the Town Hall to its utmost capacity. Thousands were turned away through want of room. The speakers pointed out the singular unanimity with which all sections of the community, European as well as Indian, and public bodies representing widely different interests, such as the Anglo-Indian Defence Association, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and the Calcutta Bar, had expressed their disapproval of the Bill. A Memorial was adopted by the meeting, praying that 'disaffection' might be defined, and that such words as 'hatred,' 'contempt,' and 'enmity,' being vague, should be omitted from the Bill. The meeting further protested against the Criminal Procedure Bill as adding to the power of the police, giving magistrates discretionary authority, and curtailing the power of the High Court. Many distinguished English barristers were present, and one of them took part."

This telegram reached us a few hours after our issue of last week had gone to press. It was, however, communicated without delay to the newspapers and, we are glad to say, was widely used in London and the country both in the evening journals of Friday and in the morning journals of Saturday last. This, it seems to us, is a thing worth recording, and we tender our thanks to our contemporaries who found room for the news. Let it be noted that neither Reuter nor the Calcutta correspondent of the *Times*—whose scandalously misused monopoly in supplying or withholding telegraphic news from India we are doing and shall continue to do our best to break down—had said one word about this meeting. If Reuter and the *Times* had had their way, as they have had hitherto, the Calcutta meeting would have been passed over in silence, and that, too, at a time when the Secretary of State for India was assuring Parliament and the public that "he did not believe, from what he heard, that the mass of Native gentlemen or educated opinion, except those connected with the Press, objected to" the proposed alterations in the law.

We did not expect the publication of our Calcutta telegram to be palatable to the official purveyors of selected information to the British Press, and therefore we were not in the least degree surprised to find in last Monday's *Times* an acrimonious message from Calcutta impugning the accuracy of our correspondent. This message, from the Calcutta correspondent of the *Times*, is so perfect an illustration of the methods and the spirit of the enemies of the Idnian National Congress, that we may be excused for quoting it in full:—

The telegram which Surendranath Banerji has sent to England for publication in the Congress organ India, describing a town's meeting, has been published here. It well illustrates the manner in which the strings are pulled, and the British public deceived. The meeting was really a fiasco, as no leading men of the native community would have any share in it. The Congress party ran it. The *European*, a paper which strongly opposed the Bill for the amendment of the law of sedition, could only describe the meeting as packed, nine-tenths of the persons present being students and schoolboys; but Banerji's descriptions reads as follows:—

"The great public meeting, the largest ever known, was opened by Sheriff Arthur and attended by nearly 4,000 people, packing the Town-Hall to its utmost capacity. Thousands returned for want of room."

The inference may possibly be drawn that Mr. Arthur sympathised with the object of the meeting, whereas he attended merely in his official capacity as sheriff.

The telegram in question says that several distinguished English barristers were present, one taking part. Two leading barristers, Messrs. Pugh and Jackson, were certainly present among the audience, but the member of the Bar who seconded one resolution is a mere junior of six years' standing. The *Statesman*, another Congress organ, euphemistically described the European element as being represented by the sheriff among others. It puts the numbers present at 2,500, and admits that a large proportion were students of the higher classes in the different colleges.

Tactics such as these bring deserved contempt upon the Congress party.

When one read this stuff one remembered the words of Sir Richard Garth—a Tory, a Privy Councillor, and a former Chief Justice of Bengal. "Of all the many acts of injustice which have marked the conduct of the Government of India of late years, there is," wrote Sir Richard three years ago, "none in my opinion which can at all compare with their insolent treatment of the Indian National Congress. There is no subject, I consider, upon which the English Press and the English public have been so cruelly and persistently misled by the Government party." Let any English journalist—in England—compare carefully the text of our correspondent's telegram with the rejoinder of the *Times*. Strip the rejoinder of Pecksniffian criticism, and what does it amount to? We are told that the meeting was a fiasco—"the Congress party ran it." But, even if this latter statement be accurate, the Congress party is, we believe, a very strong and very representative party in Calcutta, and is not in the habit of running "fiascoes." More than that, the *Times* appears to admit that the meeting was "packed." Is that a fiasco? Our correspondent said that "nearly 4,000" people were present. Somebody else appears to have estimated the number at 2,500. What of that? The most experienced observers commonly give, in perfect good faith, varying estimates of the number of an audience. Again, our correspondent said that the Sheriff opened the meeting. The *Times* says that "the inference may possibly be drawn that Mr. Arthur sympathised with the object of the meeting whereas he attended merely in his official capacity." Now, we believe that all Mr. Arthur needed to do was to call the meeting. But, in any case, are we to be held responsible for inferences which "may possibly be drawn"? Our correspondent did not state or suggest that Mr. Arthur "sympathised with the object of the meeting." Finally the *Times* admits that three English barristers were present—it does not state that there were not more—and it seems to complain that a large proportion of the audience were students of the higher classes in the colleges. A very excellent audience, too, one would think. And it is these tactics which "bring deserved contempt upon the Congress party." It is no doubt an occasion for well-merited contempt. And we are well content that the public should decide upon whom the contempt properly falls.

In this connexion it is apposite to recall the fact that the Calcutta Bar has submitted to the Government of India an able statement which accurately summarises many of the chief objections to the new repressive legislation. The

Calcutta Bar remarks *inter alia* that "what appears to be needed is a definition of 'feelings of disaffection,'" and that "the time has not come for making the telling of the truth penal in the country."

If the purpose of the *Times* in this matter is to dissuade newspapers in this country from giving publicity to the telegrams of our correspondents, its purpose has not been fulfilled. On Wednesday last we received, and communicated to the Press, the following telegram from our Madras correspondent:—

Great dissatisfaction is felt at the repressive legislation of the Government. The speeches of Sir A. Mackenzie and Sir J. Westland in the Viceroy's Council are considered insulting to educated Natives, and have excited general regret and resentment. Keen disappointment is felt at the refusal of the British Government to grant financial aid towards the cost of the frontier war. The Indian Government's representations of financial prosperity are disbelieved. The Madras Government has budgeted for the ensuing year over eight lakhs of rupees for famine relief in seven districts, though more is demanded by the famine officials for the scarcity in the home and other [or ? in some other] districts of the Presidency.

This telegram also, we are glad to say, was widely used in English journals—for example, in the *Daily Chronicle* and in the *Manchester Guardian* of Thursday. The truth is that many of the best English editors have come to realise the unfairness and the dangers of excluding from their columns all Indian intelligence which does not filter through official channels. The public at home is now interested in Indian affairs to a degree which we have never before known, and if a fair statement of Indian, as distinguished from Anglo-Indian, opinion can be regularly presented, it will be to the advantage both of India and of the United Kingdom.

The Post Office Bill, which forms part of the campaign against "sedition," is a grossly tyrannical measure, and well deserves the hard words that are being liberally flung against it. Section 20 classes "seditious" and "defamatory" matter with matter "indecent, obscene, or grossly offensive," and prohibits the transmission of all such matter by post. Section 26 puts all correspondence at the mercy of officialism. It reads thus:—

On the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of the public safety or tranquillity, the Governor-General in Council, or a Local Government, or any office specially authorised in this behalf by the Governor-General in Council, may by order in writing direct that *any postal article or class, or description of postal articles in course of transmission by post* shall be intercepted or detained, or shall be delivered to the Government, or to an officer thereof mentioned in the order, to be disposed of in such manner as the Governor-General in Council may direct. If any doubt arises as to the existence of a public emergency, or as to whether any act done under sub-section (1) was in the interest of the public safety or tranquillity, a certificate signed by a Secretary to the Government of India, or to the Local Government shall be conclusive proof on the point.

Now, we know, from the treatment of the brothers Natu, how simple a matter it will be for the Government to carry out any notion they may take into their heads "in the interest of the public safety or tranquillity." It is mere verbiage for Lord George Hamilton and Sir Richard Webster to tell the House of Commons that they propose to work their new laws "with leniency."

The *Champion* (January 30) effectively unmasks the real intentions of the Calcutta lawmakers, and indicates with some plainness of speech the real grounds of their action:—

The Post Office Bill? What has that got to do with sedition? Yes, we put the same question, when our attention was drawn to the Bill, but . . . this innocent measure, like many innocent things, hides much. *Our rulers here are in such an utter state of funk*—there is no other word that will as accurately describe the condition of their mind—that they intend to watch the letters and papers which pass through the Post Office, and to confiscate those which contain "seditious" matter. Could anything be more absurd and reactionary? Lord Elgin's advisers must be off their heads.

Englishmen who remember or have read what excitement was evoked in England by Sir James Graham's ill-advised opening of Mazzini's letters in 1845, may be expected to take a keen interest in preventing the institution of a regular espionage of postal correspondence in India by legislative enactment.

An esteemed correspondent in India points out how the operation of the proposed law is regarded in India. We ought to say that he is an Englishman of position, zealous for British as well as for Indian interests. He writes:—

You will see the injustice of the new Post Office Bill exposed in the report of our public meeting here. . . . By this Bill, *any postal officer* can stop in transit and ultimately destroy any letter, newspaper, packet, parcel, etc., which *he suspects to contain* anything which *in his opinion* is defamatory or seditious. Thus, the postmaster of Bombay could stop the whole issue of INDIA any week he chose; and, even if he passed it, any local postmaster can cut off the local supply. Every English Radical journal could similarly be stopped. *It will be a most terrible engine of oppression*, and it affects the English Press as much as us here.

The consequences that we point out elsewhere as directly flowing from the action of Government are already, as the same correspondent remarks, making their baleful appearance in Indian society. Thus:—

Things are very bad here—so bad that even Anglo-India is getting alarmed. If the Government want to *make* sedition, they are going the right way to work. *The last few months have produced a great change in the tone of the educated Natives*, and *there is now a bitterness of feeling which is quite a novelty*, but which will not be eradicated or sweetened for many a year.

We should not have quoted these expressions of fact and opinion if we had not been absolutely prepared to affirm that the writer is in no way an alarmist, but an exceptionally cool-headed observer. We ask Lord George Hamilton, then, who it is that is stirring up "racial hatred" in India. Lord Ripon's achievement was exceedingly different from this. Let the country look to it.

The division upon Mr. Herbert Roberts's amendment to the Address was taken strictly upon party lines. Mr. Maclean, in spite of his excellent speech against the policy of repression adopted by the Government, voted with his party, and of course Sir M. M. Bhownaggree did the same. The Front Opposition Bench, with the exception of the Rt. Hon. C. H. Hemphill, the Rt. Hon. C. Seale-Hayne, Sir Walter Foster, and Mr. Thomas Burt, who voted for the amendment, took no part in the division. It is all very well for official Liberals to take a conspicuous place in an Indian debate when it happens to be useful to party warfare, but one would like to see a little more of their Liberal spirit and principles in active opposition to the despotic temper which is now rampant in the internal policy of the Indian Government and the Secretary of State. Mr. Asquith walked out of the House when the division was taken. It is interesting to note that of the 109 members who voted for the amendment, 56 were members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. The tellers for the "Ayes" were Mr. Herbert Roberts and Sir William Wedderburn. Mr. Lawson Walton is a member of the Indian Parliamentary Committee and voted for the amendment. Among those who voted against the amendment were Mr. Leonard Courtney, Sir J. Fergusson, and Sir John Gorst.

We have not the space to do justice to the debate on Mr. Samuel Smith's motion last Tuesday night in favour of an Imperial contribution to the cost of the war beyond the Indian frontier. The figures of the division are disheartening enough. But they do not represent the opinion of the House of Commons, and they represent still less the opinion of the constituencies. Lord G. Hamilton (after the usual official fallacies about Indian taxation, which ignore the fact that the burden of taxation depends not upon its mere amount in figures but upon the actual sacrifice that it demands from the taxpayer) asks rhetorically "why should we override the Indian Government and force this assistance upon them?" The *Pioneer* had answered that question in advance. It is because the militarised Government of India does not want an Imperial grant, and the closer Imperial supervision which a grant would bring, that it ought to have both the one and the other.

The debate was by no means fruitless. The comments of the Press have been unusually good. The *Daily Chronicle* touched the spot when it wrote: "One of the first tasks to which the next Liberal administration should set its hand is the regulation of the Indian finances. We cannot see why the House should not appoint a Committee each Session to consider and report upon the Indian Budget, instead of leaving the whole question to the consideration of an exhausted House at the fag end of the Session." The *Pall Mall Gazette* did not find Lord G. Hamilton's speech "convincing." "His statement that no one contends that the frontier operations are an Imperial matter almost staggers us seeing that we have contended that from the first and contend it again now. . . . India has had such

an exceptional and unhappy year that no reasonable person would have objected to an exception in this case, especially for a matter which, as we say, is Imperial, and was dealt with by Mr. Curzon for one as such." Even the *Daily Mail* deviated into sense: "Great Britain is as conspicuously rich as India is notoriously poor, and a grant would be a graceful mark of sympathy at a time of acute strain and distress."

But one of the best articles on the subject was the brilliant leader in the *Westminster Gazette* of Wednesday, from which we take the following:—

We have no desire to weaken the control of anyone who can check the Indian Government in rash or extravagant courses, and if Sir James Westland is the man to do it, more power to his elbow. But it is not a question at this moment of controlling any expenditure; the time for that has, unfortunately, passed away. It is a question of finding money which has been irrevocably spent, and spent, as many of us contend, for a purpose which, whether right or wrong, was undeniably Imperial. "If ever there was an Imperial expenditure," said Sir Henry Fowler last night, "the occupation and retention of Chitral was one." It was decided on Imperial grounds by the Home Government; it has been defended to the last on Imperial grounds by British Ministers. To defray the cost at least in part out of the Imperial Exchequer would not, therefore, be to give India a dole, but to pay our share of what we ourselves have done in the alleged interests of the Empire—a thing which is not less just or desirable because India in these last months has been deeply afflicted by plague and famine and earthquake. We regret this decision with all our hearts. Added to our effort of last year to make India pay for the Indian troops employed in Egypt, and coming on top of currency troubles and the agitation about the new and gratuitous Press law, it is all too likely to add a fresh element of bitterness to our relations with the Natives of India.

While Mr. Samuel Smith's Motion was being debated in the House of Commons, Sir William Harcourt was addressing a great Liberal meeting at Bury, Lancashire. Let us place in parallel columns two significant extracts from the different speeches:—

Mr. S. Smith. House of Commons. February 22.	Sir W. Harcourt. Bury, Lancashire. February 22.
He had seen in the north of India the natives huddled together in cold, biting weather with nothing on their bodies except a cotton cloth when he was thankful to wear two top-coats. The opinion of Lord Lawrence, which he cited, was that the mass of the people of India were so miserably poor that they had hardly the means of subsistence, and Lord Cromer, one of the ablest Finance Ministers ever seen in India, estimated the average income of the people at 27 rupees per head, which was rather less than £2 sterling. Other statisticians had put the average income as low as 20 rupees. The assessable income in India was only one-tenth of what it was in the United Kingdom, and he maintained that it was impossible to squeeze more taxation out of the people of India.	The late Government were called upon to find a large sum of money for the purpose of national defence. How did they set to work upon it? The money had to be raised, and they had recourse to the ample resources of the rich. (Hear, hear.) They relieved the humble classes of the community by remission upon the income-tax; they taxed at a higher rate upon the death duties the accumulated and accumulating wealth of this country. The result exceeded the most sanguine expectations. It has produced vast surpluses, which have been realised in the last three years. The depth of the wealth of this country had not, and has not, been fathomed. It has turned out beyond the dreams of the avarice even of a Chancellor of the Exchequer. (Hear, hear.)

There seems to be a moral here.

We are glad to note that more than one ex-Cabinet Minister voted for Mr. Samuel Smith's motion on Tuesday night, claiming that the cost of the trans-frontier war should, in part at least, be borne by the British Treasury. Sir Henry Fowler, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. John Morley and Mr. Asquith were to be found in the "Aye" lobby. Sir W. V. Harcourt's engagement at Bury, Lancashire, prevented his attendance, or no doubt he would have voted with Mr. Smith. Forty-one members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee supported the claims of India in the division. Whether by design or accident, Mr. H. Seymour Foster was the only Ministerialist who voted for the motion. Mr. Maclean so far remembered his speech as to refrain from voting. Sir M. M. Bhownaggree was apparently too busy with the London County Council Election to give attention to the affairs of his countrymen. The majority was entirely composed of Tories and Liberal-Unionists. The tellers for the "Ayes" were Mr. S. Smith and Mr. Robinson Souttar, and the Government Whips were tellers on the opposite side.

What is this that we read in the *Pioneer* about Lord George Hamilton's recent speech at Chiswick?

Lord George Hamilton's speech at Chiswick exhibits the lamentable lack of grip which too often characterises his lordship's utterances on Indian questions. India is not to be helped by England, it seems, because Sir James Westland expects a large surplus. Nothing is said apparently of the deficit for the current financial year, nor is it explained that the surplus for 1898-9 will only be arrived at by calculating that a lean year is to be followed by a fat. The real reason why Lord George Hamilton has thought fit to change the tune recently played by Sir Michael Hicks Beach, is probably that he has been told from India that there is nothing the Government of India dislike more than the idea of losing their financial independence. And very naturally and properly too. What they have not hitherto recognised in practice is that the spendthrift, if he will not turn from his ways, must in the end put his pride in his pocket, and either accept assistance or go into liquidation.

In a quasi-official organ these remarks are rather significant, and their significance is increased by the fact that the *Pioneer* deprecates a contribution from the British Exchequer on the ground that it would inevitably increase Parliamentary "interference" in Indian affairs.

Lord Roberts of Kandahar has given notice that on Monday, March 7, he will call attention in the House of Lords to "the papers recently presented to Parliament relating to British relations with the neighbouring tribes on the North-West frontier of India and the military operations undertaken against them during the year 1897-98."

It is with great regret that we record the death of Sir James Stansfeld—one of the best friends India has ever had in the House of Commons, and one of the most unselfish statesmen who ever followed unswervingly the plain path of duty without regard to the consequences of their action upon their own political careers.

Mr. Michael Davitt, in his admirable speech in the House of Commons on Friday last, asked the Secretary of State for India whether it was true that Damodar Chapekar, the mendicant Marathi singer now under sentence of death for the Poona murders, had stated that he had been bribed by the police to make a confession. Neither Lord G. Hamilton nor Sir Richard Webster apparently knew anything of the matter. It may be interesting therefore to reproduce (from the *Pioneer Mail* of February 4 last) the following passage from Damodar Chapekar's statement, made in the Poona Court on February 2:—

I was in Poona in June, and left for Bombay on the 24th June. I admit that I made a confession before Mr. Hamilton, but the confession is not right. I made that confession because Mr. Brewin induced me to do so. He did not tell me that Mr. Hamilton was a magistrate. Mr. Brewin promised to give me Rs. 20,000 and build a temple in my name. He also said he would give my brother a high situation in Mr. Kennedy's office and Rs. 25 per month to my wife. He said I would not be sentenced to be hanged, but that he would see that I was transported for four or five years, and would soon be brought back. I was forced to accept the terms. I did not tell Mr. Bonus about this. I was determined not to tell this as long as I was kept in the Faraskhana. . . . My house was searched and no swords were found. They found gun barrels, but my house was not searched according to law. I showed the well, but I never said there were weapons in it. The well was dragged and they took out all the things found in my presence. I never saw the swords and rifles before. I know Nilkant Dravid by sight. He is not my brother's friend; he never came to my house, and never saw me cleaning weapons. Dravid's two brothers were in gaol for theft, and Mr. Brewin knows their family. It was because of this that Shanker Dravid gave evidence.

We see that Sir C. Dilke has given notice of a question in the House of Commons upon this grave statement.

In addition to the arrangements which we announced last week, we have the pleasure of stating that Mr. Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E., has accepted invitations to speak on Indian questions at Oxford on March 7, and at Bolton on March 9, and Mr. Bose to speak at Liverpool on March 29. Mr. Bose, who has also been invited to deliver two addresses at Manchester, had three highly successful meetings on February 16, 17, and 18—the last being in the North Wiltshire division. An interesting episode which added to the success of the meeting on the 16th inst. arose from the opposition of an Anglo-Indian official who was present. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of the work which Mr. Dutt and Mr. Bose are doing on public platforms in this country.

*** We regret that in consequence of extreme pressure upon our space this week much important matter is unavoidably held over. We have not thought fit to allow anything to interfere with the publication of a full report of the unusually interesting debates on Indian affairs which have taken place in the House of Commons during the past few days.

INDIA AND THE ADDRESS.

INDIA, it seems to us, is in danger of being ruined by the etiquette of the Front Benches. Last week we reported the interesting debate in the House of Commons on Mr. Lawson Walton's amendment to the Address. The big drums were beaten, and the big guns were very much to the fore. This week we report the not less interesting and, in many respects, far more important debates on Sir W. Wedderburn's and Mr. Herbert Roberts's amendments. But it will be seen that the "great, wise and eminent" statesmen of the Front Opposition Bench did not take part either in the discussion or in the division. The contrast is simply amazing. The war beyond the Indian Frontier is, no doubt, a matter which (especially after the present Government's flat reversal of its predecessor's policy in Chitral) lends itself to effective Liberal criticism. But surely the present Government's policy of internal repression in India—its policy of State prosecutions, of imprisonment without trial, and of stifling all helpful criticism on the ground that it is unpalatable—is no less hateful and repugnant to every man who deserves the name of Liberal. It is remarkable enough that members of the late Liberal Government should have abandoned to Liberal members below the gangway the paramount duty of bringing up this odious and calamitous tyranny for public condemnation. But that, after the Indian Parliamentary Committee had created the occasion for discussion, ex-Ministers like Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Morley, Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Bryce should have failed to support them by voice and vote, is explicable in one way, and in one way only. The Liberal leaders were paralysed by the etiquette of the Front Benches. This antiquated Parliamentary fetish apparently requires that, when once a man has discharged (however badly) the duties of a State department, he shall enjoy at least during one period of opposition a monopoly of Front Bench criticism relating to that department. It follows that the attitude of Sir Henry Fowler upon the ultra-coercive methods of the Simla clique, and their abettors and instigators in Whitehall, gave the cue to his colleagues on the Front Opposition Bench. If he had denounced, as he ought to have denounced, the policy equally cruel and shortsighted which panic has dictated to despotism, the distinguished statesmen on either side of him might without breach of etiquette have echoed his sonorous words. But as Sir Henry Fowler, for reasons best known to himself, chose to remain silent, etiquette demanded that Mr. Morley, Mr. Asquith, and even Sir William Harcourt (who showed a commendable interest in the question of the Press last summer) should remain silent too. We do not profess to understand this tomfoolery. But one thing is certain. So long as it is in vogue, it places a heavy responsibility upon Liberal ex-Ministers. Sir Henry Fowler's silence is a thing that might be borne. But that his silence should have the effect of gagging the Front Opposition Bench, and of depriving India at one of the most critical moments of her history of the services of those who might have been, and therefore ought to have been, her stoutest champions, is intolerable. Let educated Indians make no mistake. Their worst opponent in the House of Commons is not Lord George Hamilton, but Sir Henry Fowler. His prolonged silence about Chitral was sinister enough. But in stifling the Front Opposition Bench in the face of the repressive policy now directed against the best friends of British rule in India, he has gone out of his way to undertake a terrible responsibility.

The Indian Parliamentary Committee, if we understand their tactics aright, adopted a prudent and statesmanlike course. They gave notice of two amendments—one of the nature of an olive-branch, the other of the nature of an avowed attack. Sir W. Wedderburn moved the first, and Mr. Herbert Roberts moved the second. Their speeches, which are fully reported in another part of this issue of INDIA, are, taken together, a fairly complete statement of the Indian—which, if only the Simla clique could be brought to see it, is also the truly British—case. The tone of Lord George Hamilton's replies is no less noteworthy. Lord George has fallen upon evil days. When he speaks, his party somehow forgets to cheer. Even when he raises his voice to a shriek, the coveted cheers fail to come. And if his faithful, albeit ill-instructed legal adviser, Sir Richard Webster, sits by his side, that only completes the picture of a culprit on his defence. In one passage, it is true, Lord George Hamilton plucked up courage enough to make an astounding and absurdly irrelevant attack upon Lord Ripon. But he was promptly and severely rebuked by Mr. Morley, and it is significant that neither on Thursday nor on Friday did any member of the Unionist party speak in support of the Government's policy. Nor is that all. One of the best and therefore one of the most damaging speeches was delivered by Mr. Maclean, who, from the corner seat below the gangway to Lord George Hamilton's right, poured one broadside after another into the Government's position. If Mr. Michael Davitt had not spoken, Mr. Maclean would have carried off the honours of the debate. We discuss below the leading topics upon which the discussion turned. Here it may be well to note the one or two "graceful concessions" which are to be found in Lord George's speeches. We cannot, indeed, share his sanguine expectations as to the results of the Famine Commission's enquiries. The reference to the Commission is, it seems to us, so restricted as to prevent the really vital questions from being opened. But we are glad to hear (1) that the Government of India is about to consider proposals with the view of freeing the people from the influence of the money-lenders; (2) that it hopes to be able to set up what Sir William Wedderburn has so long advocated—a system of local banks; and (3) that it may endeavour to make the alienation of land less easy than it now is.

It is important also to note the remarks both of the Secretary of State and of the Attorney-General upon the scope and purpose of the proposed changes in the law of sedition in India. "The changes in the law which are now proposed," said Lord George Hamilton, "merely put in plain and unambiguous language the interpretation which has recently been given by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to Section 124A of the old code." As the Judicial Committee expressly refrained from giving any interpretation to the law at all (on the ground that the Tilak case was not of the exceptional kind which would alone have justified their interference), this particular observation does not count for much. Presumably, however, what Lord George Hamilton means is, that Mr. Justice Strachey's summing-up is to be put into unambiguous language. But again he added: "I am informed by my legal advisers that the law is practically unaltered, and that in fact the law of sedition in India and in England is almost identical. . . . *There is not the slightest intention or wish to silence or curb the Native Press.*" Of course this language is in strong contrast with the language used in the Viceroy's Council. But let us take Lord George Hamilton at his word—and keep him to it. Similarly, the Attorney-General said: "The amendments are only intended *to make clear that which has been the law ever since the Penal Code was passed.* They may or may not be desirable, but *they certainly have not the intention, nor will they have the effect of curtailing or interfering with the liberty of the Press.*" The importance of statements like these is seen at once, when one remembers that the new Bills will shortly come before the Secretary of State to be sanctioned or disallowed. It will then be the duty of the House of Commons to remind Lord George Hamilton of his own and of Sir Richard Webster's words, to pin the Government to them, and to insist that if the new legislation is inconsistent—as we believe it will be found to be inconsistent—with the purposes officially avowed to Parliament, it shall be quashed at once and for all.

APOLOGIES FOR REPRESSION.

MR. ASQUITH, in his speech on the Address, justly censured the Secretary for India for "solemn trifling" wholly unbefitting a Minister of the Crown "during a crisis like the present." "He could not help saying that of all the puerilities with which a serious topic had been overlaid, he could not recall one which, for grotesque and irresponsible levity, could compare with the scholastic pleasantries of Lord George Hamilton on the making of the Chitral road." The criticism was only too well deserved. But it is, unfortunately, capable of extended application. For Lord George Hamilton has completely boxed the compass also on the case of the brothers Natu. At any rate it is difficult to know where to have him. In the House of Commons, on August 5 last, he stated explicitly and even triumphantly, in justification of the extraordinary action of the Bombay

Government in deporting the Natus under an antiquated Regulation, that "the result would be to unravel the plot that had been formed." He still swears by a plot, for in his reply on Sir William Wedderburn's amendment on February 17, he repeated that "there was undoubtedly a dangerous conspiracy at Poona, and the outcome of it unquestionably was the murder of Mr. Rand." Now, we have waited patiently for the unmasking of this "dangerous conspiracy," and we are not yet aware that any human being outside the Bombay Government and the India Office has the slightest inkling as to who the conspirators were, or in what manner they conspired. What we do know is that Damodar Chapekar, a mendicant Marathi singer, almost "illiterate," who had been described by Reuter (October 4) as "a Brahmin and an advocate of India," has confessed to the foul murder of Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst, and has been judicially sentenced to death therefor. And that is all that the public yet know. They do not know that there actually is, or ever was, outside the heated imagination of officialism, any such conspiracy as Lord George Hamilton flaunted in the face of the House of Commons and the country. They do not know that the Bombay Government has taken any step whatever "to unravel the plot," except the deportation of the brothers Natu. The whole of the alleged conspiracy is in the sole possession of the Government officials; and the one public step the Government has taken judicially to deal with the matter has exploded Lord George Hamilton's first theory. Damodar is under sentence of death for the murder of Mr. Rand, and there is not a shred of known evidence to connect the Natus with the alleged conspiracy, of which the murder was "unquestionably the outcome." If there did exist any such evidence, the Natus would of course be promptly brought to trial and hanged by the neck till dead and beyond the power to trouble the Government and the country.

Another theory thus became necessary to justify the despotic action of the Bombay Government, which Lord George Hamilton had previously sanctioned. In the discussion of Mr. Herbert Roberts's amendment, on February 18, accordingly, Lord George shifted his position. "The Government," he said, "had a clear and paramount duty to perform, and if clear and indisputable evidence was placed before them that certain persons even in high stations were traitors to the efforts to combat the plague, they were bound to act accordingly." We agree. But how to act? Why, to lay the obstructive people by the heels in the ordinary course of the law on that behalf made and provided. The ordinary law is perfectly sufficient for such a case; there was not the smallest need to explore the dusty archives for the Regulation of 1827. But again Lord George drags in his conspiracy:—

> For some time past there had been a great deal of disturbance in the Deccan. The movement was obviously seditious in its character, and in almost every case it could be traced back to Poona, and, ultimately, to a limited section of persons in that town. So long as the Bombay Government had to deal with an ordinary state of affairs, it was not necessary for them to take any special notice of what unquestionably was now proved to be *a small but well-organised conspiracy*. But when they had to deal with the plague, the situation assumed a different aspect. It was assumed that the brothers Natu gave great assistance to the Bombay Government, but that was not the opinion of the authorities. The brothers Natu did everything in their power to stir up unrest, and they worked against the regulations, the enforcement of which could alone save the people.

Now here is an alleged conspiracy located anywhere and everywhere throughout the Deccan, but not worth the Government's trouble until the arrival of the plague, when it seems to be connected somehow with the Natu brothers. We have published (November last) the correspondence on the plague measures between Sirdar B. R. Natu and Mr. Lamb. That correspondence shows very clearly a remarkably different spirit from that ascribed to Sirdar Natu by Lord George Hamilton on the report of the Bombay Government. As Sir William Wedderburn expressed it in his letter of November 4 to the Secretary of State, Sirdar Natu, on March 30, "prayed Mr. Lamb to make personal enquiry into certain alleged irregularities in the segregation work, such irregularities involving unnecessary hardships to individuals, disregard for religious and social prejudices, and needless destruction of property." Sirdar Natu's letter further complained that the advice and protests of the Indian gentlemen acting as volunteers were disregarded, and gave the names of certain European officers and Indian gentlemen of position as witnesses to the facts. The men who displayed such admirable good sense and anxiety for the rational administration of the plague measures are branded by the Secretary of State as "traitors to the efforts to combat the plague." Here is a Native gentleman, well acquainted with the people and their customs and beliefs, seeing with his own eyes the operation of the plague rules, and confirmed in his observation by European officers as well as by Indian gentlemen of position. He courteously requests the District Magistrate to come and see for himself. And he is deported as a "traitor to the efforts to combat the plague." It is impossible to stigmatise such treatment by any parliamentary epithet.

But Lord George Hamilton went on to say that "after the murder of Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst, the Government were put in possession of evidence of a serious plot." This alleged plot, then, is a further development of the vague conspiracy in the Deccan. What evidence does Lord George adduce? First, the deposition of a nurse that she had received a letter "*purporting* to be signed by one of the brothers Natu, stating that it would be greatly to her detriment if she worked with the search party." Has this allegation been investigated? If not, why not? If it has, then why does Lord George say "*purporting* to be signed"? Why not simply "signed"—which would be a very different matter? The nurse lost her practice as a midwife, and Lord George solemnly told the House of Commons there was no law at the disposal of the Indian Government "to stop intimidation of that character"! Secondly, Lorge George alleges that one of the Natus "attempted in a most assiduous (? insidious) way to induce the police to declare that a woman who had really died from disease had been violated by a British soldier and had died in consequence." Therefore the 1827 Regulation was necessary! And, after all, we find Lord George Hamilton informing Sir William Wedderburn on February 8 that the grounds of the detention of the Natus "have no relevancy whatever to the correspondence mentioned in your letter." Here are "scholastic pleasantries" with a vengeance.

Lord George Hamilton refuses to interfere with the discretion of the Bombay Government with a view to shortening the prison term of Mr. Tilak. He says, "Tilak's articles were a clear incitement to assassination." It may be replied that not a single person who could read the original and understood the circumstances has ever been known to hold that opinion, and that the opinion of such as cannot read the original and will not have regard to the circumstances is not entitled to the slightest regard. Further, it was fully admitted that Mr. Tilak's articles had no connexion whatever with the particular murders of Jubilee Day, although had it not been for these murders Mr. Tilak would almost certainly not have been prosecuted. Again Lord George is in a fog. But, in any case, the final responsibility lies with him, and if he hardens his heart against patent facts and tendencies, he will have to stand the consequences. He is sedulously stirring racial hatreds that cannot but bear bitter fruit in the near future. Meantime, it is some satisfaction to know that Mr. Tilak is not subjected to "rigorous" imprisonment.

The Government's apology for the new law of sedition was an extremely lame one. The Attorney-General did not hesitate to reassure the House, although he admitted that he had not seen the whole of the amended Code. He found Mr. Justice Strachey's summing-up of the Tilak case "a reasonable and sensible exposition of the law and its application." The law was not changed in any tittle, and the amendments—"they certainly had not the intention, nor would they have the effect, of curtailing or interfering with the liberty of the the Press." Sir Richard, strangely enough, seems to have caught the infection of Lord George's "irresponsible levity." The proposed changes in the law of sedition, said Lord George, "merely put in plain and unambiguous language the interpretation which had recently been given by the Privy Council to to Section 124A." But did the Privy Council put any interpretation whatever upon that section? Did not that august tribunal deliberately shirk the point? As to the Criminal Procedure Bill, Lord George "did not believe, from what he heard, that the mass of Native gentlemen or educated opinion, except those connected with the Press, objected to the alterations." Lord George does not seem to have opened his ears very widely for information. It would hardly be too much to say that professional and public opinion in India is all but solid in demanding a variety of most important modifications. Speaking on this

Bill at the last National Congress, Mr. John Adam, of Madras, pointed out very justly that, with two exceptions, "there is not a single improvement introduced into this Bill, there is not a single line added or altered in the direction of progress." "As to the clearing up of doubts which may have arisen," he added, "these are infinitesimally few in number, two or three at the very most; and where they have been cleared up, they have been cleared up on the side of making the law more severe against accused persons." That is, more severe in the sense of bearing unfairly upon them. In the words of the Congress Resolution, the Bill "will add to the already large powers of the police, invest magistrates with a discretionary authority which they do not now possess, and curtail the powers of the High Court, all to the extreme prejudice of accused persons." The plain fact is that the Government is transforming itself from a civil administration to a military tyranny, under the direction and control of the "high military mandarins" at Calcutta.

THE PRESS IN INDIA.

By Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E.
(Late Officiating Commissioner of Orissa.)

THE relations between the Native Indian Press and the Anglo-Indian Press in India, caused me much regret during the many years that I was engaged in administrative work in India. That these two sections of the Indian Press should differ in their politics as widely as the *Standard* and the *Daily Chronicle* in this country is quite intelligible; but that they should indulge in violent and often bitter recriminations seemed to me to be a source of political danger in India.

In politics they must agree to differ. The Anglo-Indian Press represents the interests of the English in India—of the European officials, planters, merchants and capitalists—who find India a good field for their industry, enterprise and capital. It supports the Government in its present form and deprecates the extension of popular rights and privileges as detrimental to European interests. It considers a mild despotism to be the system of Government suited for India, and lavishes as much labour and care in shaping, securing and maintaining that despotism as the most fervent idolator lavishes in shaping and adorning the idol of his worship. Rule over the million by a handful of benevolent alien rulers, without allowing the million or their representatives a hand or a voice in the administration, is the cult of the Anglo-Indian Press, and any departure from this system is deprecated as fatal to the interests of India, by which is implied the European community in India whose interests the English Press represents.

The Native Indian Press represents the interests of the educated people of India which are more or less identical with the interests of the million. It labours to bring the government of alien rulers more in touch with the people, and demands for the educated Indian a real share in the administration. It urges that no Government, however benevolent, can safeguard the interests of the people, unless the people themselves are allowed to speak, and that in frequent recent instances the interests of the unrepresented million have been sacrificed to those of English merchants and manufacturers who have votes, or to the whims of the military party who have influence. It urges that the legitimate Customs Duties of India have been sacrificed at the bidding of the manufacturers of Lancashire; that what is called the "Slave Law" in India, has been kept up under the bidding of tea-planters in India; that new and unprofitable lines of railway, not required for political purposes, have been opened at the cost or under the guarantee of the Indian Government virtually at the bidding of the British capitalist and manufacturer; that momentous questions relating to the executive or legislative policy of India are decided by telegraphic communications between the India Office and Simla, and often wrongly decided, because the people are not consulted until too late; and lastly, that the agriculturists in India, forming four-fifths of the nation, have been reduced to poverty, and become subject to frequent and disastrous famines, through a system of land administration which is unwise and illiberal. The Native Indian Press urges, therefore, that a government by aliens, however benevolent in its intention, cannot effectually safeguard the interests of the people unless the people are allowed to speak and to advise; that pure despotism, however mild and well-intentioned, has been found by experience, in Europe and in India, to fail in its object of securing and serving the interests of the million; and that the time has now come, after three generations of Indians have been educated in English schools and colleges in India, to modify the present system of Indian administration so as to allow the representatives of the people not to control the policy and action of the Government of India, but to be heard and consulted on every important question of internal administration before action is taken.

I will not here stop to argue that the Indian view is more in consonance with reason and with the spirit of the modern times than the Anglo-Indian view; what I want to point out here is that the two views must always be necessarily opposed, being the views of two different communities in India. It is possible that the Native Indian journalists go too far; it is possible that the Anglo-Indian journalists do not go far enough; but the result is they must agree to differ, and that there is no possibility of bridging over the gulf between them. What I ask for is some degree of moderation and forbearance on the part of both.

The main difference, however, between the state of the two parties in England and the state of the two parties in India, is that in England both parties can make themselves heard, and the public judge of questions after hearing both sides; whereas of the two Indian parties, if I may so call them, only the Anglo-Indian party can make itself heard in England, while the Native Indian party cannot make itself heard. Let us imagine some of the great public questions like Irish Home Rule or the Eastern question discussed in England only by one party, the other being compelled to hold silence. What an incorrect, one-sided, false impression would be created if we heard only one party, be it the Tory or the Radical. And yet in all important Indian questions a similar incorrect, one-sided and false impression is being created in England, because only one version of the Indian questions is eternally before the British public, the other version is not heard.

This kind of misrepresentation of facts—inevitable when one party speaks and the other cannot—has been going on for years. Anglo-Indian writers put forward their version in books, articles, and newspapers, often with a bitterness which exceeds the bitterness of the worst Native Indian papers, and which excites the suspicion that a case must be bad which has to be defended with so much bad language. Anglo-Indian humourists and essayists find it a safe and congenial and gallant occupation to attack in this country a people who cannot defend themselves. The editor of an Anglo-Indian journal has in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century* put forward the Anglo-Indian view of the Native Indian Press. And Anglo-Indian correspondents of British papers wire from India the Anglo-Indian version of Indian questions, never the views of the people. The British public are not properly served in matters of Indian news; the opinions and sentiments of the people of India on great questions, urged in their best newspapers in India, are scrupulously kept away from the British public; the Anglo-Indian view is eternally before them.

I have said that some degree of misrepresentation is inevitable when one party is heard and the other is not heard. But never perhaps within the last thirty or forty years, that I can remember, has this kind of misrepresentation approached the dimensions which it has assumed within the last twelve months. A cry has been raised of the general disaffection and disloyalty of Native Indian papers, a cry which is utterly untrue and utterly unfounded. I read nearly all the important Native Indian papers as they arrive from Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Lahore and the North-West Provinces, week after week, and although these journals are strong in their advocacy of the rights of the people and sharp in their criticism of wrong and injustice, I deliberately affirm that they are generally written with a degree of moderation, and with a sense of loyalty and respect to the ruling power, which we do not always find either in the Anglo-Indian journals in India, or in the journals in this country. The Native Indian journals are often charged with misrepresentation; but I state a simple truth when I say that I have never within

the last thirty or forty years found them guilty of a grosser misrepresentation than the cry which has been raised against them that they are disloyal and disaffected to the ruling power.

I do not attribute this misrepresentation to a deliberate desire to distort facts but to reckless partisanship. It is one of the evils of party warfare, and the evil is enhanced tenfold when one party speaks and the other cannot. The Native Indian Press criticises the action of Anglo-Indian officials; partisanship puts this down as *disaffection* to the British rule. The Native Indian Press claims for the people a share in the real administration of the country; partisanship puts this down as *disloyalty* to the present form of government. Party writers hope that by enacting a new Sedition Law, by muzzling the Native Indian Press, it will be possible to repress all agitation for reform, and to continue the present system of ruling India, without consulting the wishes and opinions of the people, and without allowing them a real share in the administration of their own concerns.

A vain hope at the close of the nineteenth century. And if anything is likely to hasten the introduction of the popular element in the Government of India, the series of blunders which have been committed of late are likely to hasten it. The impoverishment of the masses and the frequent famines—six great famines within the sixty years of her Majesty's reign—call for some revision of the present system of rule. And the waste of Indian revenues in trans-frontier wars in Burma and in Kabul seems to accentuate the demand. As an eminent authority, Mr. G. E. Ward, himself an Indian administrator of large experience has said, in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review* for January, "What is wanted is that more control should be exercised in India, and by the Indian people, over their own affairs."

This is precisely what the Native Indian Press has consistently and loudly asked for; and this demand has been misrepresented by the opposite party as *sedition* and *disaffection*.

THE WEEK IN PARLIAMENT.

BY OUR OWN ONLOOKER.

THE affairs of India have been before the House repeatedly during the week, and though the attitude of the Government has been persistently and consistently hostile and wrong-headed, yet the discussions are likely to do good in the end. It was late, indeed past eleven o'clock, on Thursday when Sir W. Wedderburn found an opportunity of moving his amendment to the Address. It claimed that the people of India were entitled to special consideration and forbearance owing to the patient manner in which they had endured "the miseries of famine, plague, poverty and other afflictions" during the past year. By one of those accidents so common in Parliament, this amendment came on when the House was neither willing nor able to appreciate the case. A debate of extraordinary interest though of no importance had been kept up briskly during the whole previous part of the sitting as to the establishment and endowment by the State of a Roman Catholic University in Ireland. It rarely happens that in the House of Commons member after member rises to speak without its being a sort of foregone conclusion as to what they will say or at least what side they will take. In this Irish affair however there was no such certainty, and it was the absence of that element which gave the affair its interest. And the unusual grouping of members was also striking to the onlooker. The Nationalist Irish members were supported by Mr. Balfour, Mr. Courtney, Mr. John Morley. Mr. Carson, and Mr. Lecky. They were furiously opposed by the Orange brigade, and strenuously by typical Nonconformists such as Mr. Perks and Mr. Lloyd George. The debate ended in the amendment being negatived without a division. No debate on an amendment to the Address is decided on its merits. Mr. Balfour and many another distinguished Unionist had supported the Irish in the debate, but would have had to vote against them had there been a division.

It was only after all this that Sir William Wedderburn found his opportunity to move the amendment I have already mentioned. He spoke with that air of conviction, of single-minded devotion to the unrepresented millions of India, and also with that knowledge of the subject which gain him the respect of all—except Lord George Hamilton. Sir William referred to the various definitions we have had of what is known as the "Key of India," and he added one of his own, "the key of India was to be found in the contentment and prosperity of the people of India," and he paid a tribute to the wisdom with which Lord Ripon had recognised that fact, a tribute which led Lord George Hamilton to add to his list of inept and foolish blunders by delivering yet one more unfortunate speech. Sir William made a special appeal on behalf of Mr. Tilak—"a scholar and a man who had done good work as a legislator and educationist"—and also on behalf of the Natu brothers, who have now been imprisoned for seven months without trial.

But, of course, all this was thrown away on Lord George Hamilton. I have watched him carefully this Session, and like all weak men, he is giving way under the strain and becoming noisily ineffective. He thinks weak utterances can be made strong by mere shouting, and that ignorance is concealed by thumps on the table. His "reply" to Sir William Wedderburn was distinguished by this noisy and self-condemning style. He accused the hon. baronet of helping to stir up race against race, and then going out of his way entirely he aimed a flout or two at Lord Ripon. "One of the difficulties," he said, "of the present Government is to allay the race feeling which Lord Ripon aroused." I could not help thinking as I heard those words that even if it were true that Lord Ripon had done anything of the sort, this Government was not likely to "allay" either that or any other feeling in India. Mr. John Morley in a sentence or two protested against this "gratuitous, wanton, and uncalled-for language." The attack had no excuse and should not have been made. "Why not?" cheerfully chirped the noble lord. Mr. Morley told him why, and gave him a hint that if he repeated that sort of conduct he would be trounced again, as he was trounced a day or two before by Mr. Asquith. Sir William Wedderburn's amendment was then withdrawn.

On Friday a very supplementary amendment was brought forward by Mr. Herbert Roberts, having particular reference to the deportation and detention of prisoners without trial, to Press prosecutions and the increase of severity in the law relating to sedition in India. This gave Mr. Roberts a chance for arguing the cases of the Natu brothers and Mr. Tilak again with clearness and force. He unsparingly condemned the unearthing of some mouldy old Act of 1827—passed when we were conquering the country—for the purpose of getting the Messrs. Natu quietly out of the way, and he also showed that to muzzle the Press was the height of folly even from the point of view of those in favour of repression. It is really unnecessary to follow out the series of absurdities and inaccuracies which Lord George Hamilton presented to the House as a speech. About the only definite thing he said was that the Natu brothers must stay in prison until the plague ceased. What was of more importance was a vigorous defence of the Press of India by Mr. Maclean, a Tory member who has lived in India and edited a paper there. He showed the consummate folly of trying to crush the Press, and said that already the punishments inflicted had shocked the public in this country by their severity. It is perhaps worthy of note that during the debate Lord George Hamilton denied having attacked Lord Ripon the night before. I would not think of accusing him of wilful untruthfulness. The fact is he rarely knows what he is talking about, and he often does not know even what he is saying.

Monday was chiefly devoted to the introduction of the Government's Irish Local Government Bill by Mr. Gerald Balfour. It is enough to say that his speech was clear and well delivered, and the Bill, so far as it could be understood from the necessarily condensed first reading speech, seemed to be a democratic and good one. At any rate the absurd and antiquated old system has gone for ever in Ireland. The only point in the Bill that is likely to rouse Radical opposition is the payment of three quarters of a million a year to the Irish landlords to buy off their hostility. But I don't anticipate much opposition to the Bill.

On Tuesday India came up yet again—it has been scarcely anything but Ireland and India this Session so far. Mr. Samuel Smith moved that this country ought to assist India in paying the expenses of the recent operations beyond the North-West frontier. In this he received considerable support, but, of course, Lord George Hamilton (and I am really becoming tired of mentioning his name) opposed the motion. He has the art of making a bad case appear worse by the way in which he puts it, and so with regard to this. For he actually declared that the recent fighting was only a local affair, and of no Imperial interest, and, he said, the fact that the people of India were poor was no reason for their being assisted. That first "argument" was too much even for Sir Henry Fowler, and he protested that the war was certainly an Imperial affair, and had been to a great extent the outcome of our European relationships. But it was all no good, and once more India's friends were defeated in the lobby.

INDIA IN THE BRITISH PRESS.

THE POLICY OF REPRESSION.

The *Manchester Guardian's* first leading article on Saturday, February 19, was as follows:—

It is not without significance that the debate in the House of Commons on the Frontier policy of the Indian Government should be closely followed by a discussion of its domestic administration. To ascribe all the evils from which India is now suffering to the forward military policy would, of course,

be an exaggeration, but it is no exaggeration to say that the burden placed upon the Indian taxpayer by the unwisdom of a Government in which he has no share has aggravated the misery and accentuated the discontent which plague and famine might have produced of themselves. Moreover, the ascendency of military ideas is seen clearly enough in the deliberate abandonment of all the best traditions of Indian government to which the authorities have committed themselves. The new Press Law was defended by Lord George Hamilton last night on the ground that it merely put plainly the existing interpretation—that is to say, Mr. Justice Strachey's interpretation—of the present law. It is true enough that under the interpretation which secured a verdict against Mr. Tilak any criticism of any Government measure containing a disparaging epithet or phrase might be construed as seditious. But what most Englishmen felt when they read the summing up and verdict in the Tilak case was that if this were the law it was high time for it to be altered. The Indian Government agree, but they alter it in the direction of plainer and more emphatic suppression. For the future all adverse comment, English or Native, on the actions of the Indian Government will be published on sufferance. At any moment anyone, English or Native, who ventures to expose, say, such repressive measures as the present in anything like suitable terms may find himself in prison with two years' leisure for reflecting on those blessings of freedom which follow our flag whithersoever it goes. Nor is this all. If he dares to expose the incompetence of any young magistrate with a few years' Indian experience to eke out the wisdom acquired at Oxford or Cambridge, he may find himself pleading for his liberty before the very man whom he has criticised, and will experience all the benefits of a simplified criminal procedure in which prosecutor and judge are united in one person. Lord George Hamilton explained, indeed, that the whole law was conceived in the most paternal spirit. "Guidance," it appears, is what the Indian Press requires. Well, all men need guidance, but unfortunately not all men are competent to give it; and with regard to the Press, a ruler of India, one might think, would recognise that the very errors and extravagances of the Native newspapers give unintentional but valuable guidance to those who really wish to know the mind of the people they are set over. Mr. Maclean's retort was conclusive that guidance as conceived in the spirit of the new law makes the Press worthless. A writer who does not express his own sincere conviction can write to no end but that of making himself contemptible, and if the Indian Press is only to write to order it had better cease to exist. It is clear that this is very much the view taken in India itself, and in face of the protests of such newspapers as the *Times of India* and such meetings as that recently held in Calcutta, we may be allowed to pass over Lord George Hamilton's endeavour to minimise the strength of the hostile feeling as unworthy of serious refutation.

If anything could be more repugnant to English ideas than this attempt to gag the Press it would be the practice of arresting and imprisoning suspected persons without trial. It is now six months since the brothers Natu were deported from Poona and placed under arrest. The detention may be legal; there is a law to authorise it. But it may be worth while to consider what was the state of India when the laws were passed which give such great power to the executive authorities. Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827 is copied from the Bengal Regulation III of 1818. In 1817 it had taken the combined efforts of British armies numbering 120,000 men to restore order and peace in Central India, then ravaged by the Pindaris, who have been likened to the Free Companies of mediæval Europe. Hardly were the Pindaris put down when the three great Mahratta powers of Poona, Nagpur, and Indore, rose against the British, and three separate pitched battles were fought, and the Poona dominions were annexed by the British. A great part of India had been seething in wild disorder. Realise the scene and the preamble to the Bengal Regulation III of 1818 does not read strangely: "Whereas reasons of State, embracing the due maintenance of the alliances formed by the British Government with foreign Powers, the preservation of tranquillity in the territories of Native princes entitled to its protection, and the security of the British dominions from foreign hostility and from internal commotion, occasionally render it necessary to place under personal restraint individuals against whom there may not be any sufficient ground to institute any judicial proceedings, or when such proceedings may not be adapted to the nature of the case, or may for other reasons be unadvisable or improper." Thus a Regulation passed to deal with a state of war is used 80 years later to thwart an alleged conspiracy in time of peace. Of course Lord George Hamilton is convinced that there was "clear and indisputable evidence" against these men, only, it would seem, like the equally indisputable evidence against Captain Dreyfus, it cannot be produced. "Immense care" was taken in "looking into the matter," one result being that last summer everyone gathered from Lord George Hamilton's explanations that the Natu brothers were connected with the Poona murders, while the charge now suggested against them is wholly different. But when was there ever a case of this kind in which "immense care" had not been taken to ascertain the guilt which could not be proved, or in which the evidence fell short of being indisputable in the eyes of the officials who refused to produce it? But whatever their past guilt, will Lord George Hamilton go so far as to say that the continued detention of these two gentlemen is necessary in order to secure Her Majesty's dominions from internal commotion? He has no right to keep them in custody by way of punishment for anything, which they may have done; prevention, not punishment, is the object of the Regulation. The question is not merely whether they did or did not oppose the sanitary measures of the Government last year, but whether they would become a source of "internal commotion" if liberated now. Unless there is "clear and indisputable" evidence on this point their detention is not even authorised by the antiquated law which has been made to cover it.

We need not now argue the abstract question whether arbitrary arrest is ever justified, and, if so, under what circumstances. The real question at issue embraces the whole system of government in India. Even if some sort of defence could be made out for these arrests taken by themselves, taken in conjunction with the recent Press prosecutions and the present proposed legislation, there cannot be the slightest doubt of the general tendency which they betray. Briefly, they indicate the abandonment of the attempt to govern India upon English principles in favour of a rule framed upon the Russian model. Everyone knows that a Government conceived on Liberal lines meets with temporary difficulties which a mere despotism can brush aside. For this reason hard times like the present give the advocates of force an opportunity which they are never slow to seize. Weak men give way to the cry. They are convinced by the advocates of a "strong" policy that India will revolt if she is not oppressed, just as they were intimidated by the military party into the belief that India would be invaded if she did not break down all her natural bulwarks. Those who urge a little patience, a little consideration, and some measure of perseverance in methods that have not been without their measure of success in the past are dismissed as unpractical theorists or as councillors of timidity. We can only hope that the conversion of those in authority may be as rapid as it has been in the matter of the frontier policy, but that it may proceed from calm consideration and not from the stern lessons of disaster.

Imperial Parliament.

Thursday, February 17.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE NEW LAW OF SEDITION.

With reference to Sir W. Wedderburn's question reported in our last issue, the following supplementary question was asked:—

Mr. Macneill asked whether this new legislation had been initiated on the advice of the Government of India or of the India Office.

Lord G. Hamilton: I will lay correspondence relating to these measures on the Table of the House, and then the hon. gentleman will be able to form his own opinion.

THE DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS.
SIR W. WEDDERBURN'S AMENDMENT.
THE CONDITION OF INDIA.
APPEAL FOR FORBEARANCE AND ENQUIRY.

Sir W. Wedderburn rose to move the following amendment to be added to the Address at the end:—"And we humbly pray that your Majesty, looking to the miseries patiently endured by the Indian people from famine, plague, poverty, and other afflictions during the past year, will graciously direct that special forbearance be shown towards them, and that careful enquiry be made into their present condition in order to restore confidence among the suffering masses, and thus prepare the way for healing measures tending to bring back peace and prosperity." He said that the occurrences beyond the North West frontier had received full discussion, but it appeared to him that the internal condition of India was at present a matter of even graver anxiety. He thought that for the present the external question had been settled—not by the arguments of orators, but by the logic of facts. The people of this country now knew, and the Government themselves knew, that the policy of aggression, and of disregard of the rights of others, had been a disastrous failure. (Hear, hear.) When he listened to the glowing periods of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and his ingenious eulogy of the forward policy, and compared it with the bloodshed and ruin which had resulted, it made him think of Dead Sea fruit—beautiful outside, but dust and ashes to the teeth. A policy not founded on righteousness was a mere whited sepulchre—fair without, but within filled with dead men's bones and all uncleanness. He proposed to deal only with the internal affairs of India, and he only referred to frontier matters for one reason. That was because he thought it necessary to draw attention to one point of Russian policy, a point which had not been dwelt on in the debate, but which had a direct bearing on the internal condition of India. The point was this, that in all their schemes for an attack upon India the Russians depended mainly upon help from within. Their only real hope of success was that while the "thin red line" confronted them on the border, there would be a rising of the population behind, which would cut us off from our base, and overwhelm us by its mere weight. On the other

hand, if the people of India were prepared to support the British Government, as they did even in the darkest times of the Mutiny, they would form our ultimate line of defence, a line of defence which could not be broken down. (Hear, hear.) The feeling and attitude of the people might be our greatest danger, or it might be our greatest safety. In former times they heard a great deal about the "key of India." At one time it was supposed to be at Herat, for some time, he thought, at Merv, then in London, then at Kandahar. But it was at none of these places, far less at Chitral or at Malakand. The "key of India" was to be found in the contentment and prosperity of the people of India. (Cheers.) That key had been securely held by the Marquis of Ripon when he was Viceroy of India, and it would be an ill day for this country and for India when that key was let drop or thrown away from heedlessness or misunderstanding. Let them not deceive themselves. This was a question of the very existence of our Indian Empire. But he did not wish to appeal to fears. He desired rather to appeal to the justice and prudence, and humanity of the Government and of that House. During the past year almost every possible calamity had befallen the Indian people—famine, plague, war and earthquake. Unfortunately also their sufferings were aggravated by the very measures taken for their relief. These measures, such as plague segregation, were necessary and well-intentioned, but they involved fresh hardships by invading domestic privacy, which to Orientals was almost dearer than life itself. The people were thus distracted, and almost driven to despair. Under these circumstances words and acts of sympathy were sorely needed, to soothe the minds of the people, and encourage them to bear up under their afflictions. (Cheers.) Anger against them and severity were quite out of place. He therefore deeply regretted that severe measures of repression had been adopted by the authorities, and that still more stringent measures were being prepared. This severity was a new departure of a serious kind, and he would beseech the Government to pause, to give the people another chance. In any case he would ask them to bear in mind the sufferings of the people, and not to exercise more severity than was absolutely unavoidable. With the permission of the House he would read a few lines from a letter he had just received from an old friend of his, a retired Indian judge, who after a long and distinguished career, was devoting the remainder of his days to works of religion and charity. This was what he said of the condition of the people, speaking not in anger but in sorrow: "The times here are very dark. The people have suffered fearfully. Above all, the Government has changed its character. It is not the same British Government which I have known all my life and which I served so long. I do not know how long this will last. But mark the words of an old man—this will do no good to your rule or to India. Not even during the Mutiny were things so bad as they have been in the Deccan during the last year." These were the words of a faithful servant and friend of the British Government, and he (Sir William) believed that they were strictly true. (Hear, hear.) These measures of repression, directed against freedom of speech and the liberty of the Press, would do no good to our rule in India. They chiefly affected the educated classes, and the motive for imposing them arose from a complete misunderstanding of the feelings and objects of those classes. If the House would bear with him he would point out certain facts within his personal knowledge, going to prove two propositions: 1st. That the educated classes were firmly attached to British rule by the solid conviction that with it was bound up the only hope of a happy future for India; and 2nd. That the repressive measures were a mistake because they struck at our best friends and that a policy of sympathy and forbearance was both safe and beneficial. The hon. member for West Edinburgh had pointed out how difficult it was for the Secretary of State for India to learn the real facts and to maintain an impartial control, especially in questions where official interests were directly concerned. Recently in a very important matter, relating to the attitude of the wild frontier tribes, the noble lord had been misled by his official informants. He had been assured that these tribes welcomed the military occupation of the mountain strongholds. He now knew that this was a delusion which had resulted in much disaster. Would the noble lord not take warning from this unhappy experience. (Hear, hear.) The central fact with reference to the tribes beyond the frontier was their passionate love of independence. The central fact with reference to the educated classes in India was their solid attachment to British rule. (Cheers.) To think otherwise, to suppose that the educated classes desired to upset, or even to weaken British rule, was a delusion; and to act upon this delusion by attacks upon these classes must inevitably lead to very unhappy results. Educated Indians were very intelligent—no one doubted that—and they knew perfectly well that India could not stand alone, and that the only alternative to British rule was Russian rule, or the still worse fate of anarchy. They therefore clung to British rule; they had adopted it as their national government; and their only desire was to make it strong in the approval and affection of the people. If they criticised Government measures it was because they wished to let the Government know the feelings of the people, and to warn it if there was danger ahead. (Hear, hear.) A foreign Government must always be acting with insufficient knowledge. They were driving along a dark and unknown road, and the man who warned them of an obstacle or a pitfall was a friend and not an enemy, and should be treated accordingly. When he assured the House that educated Indians were to be trusted, it might be asked with what authority he spoke, and he would reply that he had been for many years on terms of intimate confidence with their leaders, and the views above stated faithfully expressed their feelings. (Cheers.) He and his family before him had served the Indian Government since the beginning of the century, and, whatever might be said in the heat of controversy, he did not suppose that any hon. member believed that he had at heart anything but the welfare and prosperity of their Indian Empire. His second proposition was that a policy of sympathy and forbearance was both safe and beneficial. They wanted to promote affection among the people, as that was the best way of getting rid of disaffection. That this was by no means impossible was shown by the career of Lord Ripon as Viceroy, who created among the people not only contentment but enthusiasm for British rule. (Cheers.) Their only real rival was Russia, and they would best strengthen their position in the eyes of the people by emphasizing the difference between British methods and Russian methods. Freedom of speech, the liberty of the Press, and higher education—these were the inestimable boons which Britain had conferred upon India. These were the gifts which Russia could never bestow, and to impair them in any way was to throw away the great advantage they possessed. He always wondered that the British people did not take more national pride in the great Indian race which was gradually awakening under the touch of Western thought and action. It was a race full of virtues. What did the great Akbar say of them? "The Hindus are religious, affable, cheerful, lovers of justice, able in business, admirers of truth, grateful and of unbounded fidelity; and their soldiers know not what it is to fly from the field of battle." That was true then, and was true now. (Hear, hear.) They were justly proud of the valour and endurance shown by the British troops. None were more distinguished than the Gordon Highlanders, who were raised in the glens of the county he had the honour to represent. But he thought that the Indian soldiers had justified the words of the great Akbar and had in no way been behind their British comrades. In dealing with a race at the same time so docile and so intelligent, and now so suffering, would it not be wise and humane to exercise an abundant forbearance? Would not the noble lord hold out the olive branch, and give an opportunity to clear away misunderstandings and revive the old feelings of mutual regard. (Hear, hear.) There was the heavy cost of punitive police imposed at Poona, which struck the innocent with the guilty. Might not that be removed? There was the case of Mr. Tilak, a scholar and a man who had done good service as a legislator and an educationist. Might not his sentence be now mitigated, or at least the penalty of hard labour remitted, which condemned him to prison dress and association with the lowest class of criminals. There were the Natu brothers, who had now been imprisoned six months without trial. Might they not be released. (Hear, hear.) Above all he would most earnestly urge the noble lord to postpone any change in the criminal law till more quiet times. The proposed changes regarding sedition were viewed with the greatest alarm throughout India, and an announcement that they had been postponed would do much to quiet the public mind. In his recent speech on external affairs the noble lord had shown an open mind and a conciliatory spirit. Would he not do so in the case of internal administration where patience and forbearance were still more needed, and where the consequences would be still more far-reaching. (Hear, hear.) He begged to move the amendment which stood in his name. (Cheers.)

Mr. S. Smith seconded the motion.

Lord G. Hamilton: The hon. baronet, in his motion, asks me to express on the part of the Government some sympathy for the sufferings undergone in recent months by the people of India. But the speech of the hon. baronet is almost exclusively directed to another amendment, which is not now before the House. As far as the great mass of the people of India are concerned the Government of India have done their best for the last fifteen months to alleviate the misery and distress in India. (Hear, hear.) I doubt whether such efforts were ever before made by any Government—(cheers)—and owing to the strain put upon them several officials of the Civil Service have died at their posts. But I never knew the hon. baronet do anything but minimise the efforts of the Indian Government. (Cheers.) There has been famine in India over an area inhabited by 24 millions of people, and plague has been rife in Bombay. But the hon. baronet's attention is directed only to Poona; and it is not for the people even there that he is concerned. It is for three or four friends of his with whom we have been compelled to deal. And why? Because they have done everything in their power to thwart and prevent the Government in their efforts to carry out their benevolent designs. (Hear, hear.) There was undoubtedly a dangerous conspiracy at Poona, and the outcome of it unquestionably was the murder of Mr. Rand. (Cheers.) The hon. baronet hopes that I shall be disposed to imitate the acts of Lord Ripon. I do not doubt Lord Ripon's good intentions, but no one who knows anything about India to-day would deny that Lord Ripon succeeded in raising a racial feeling in India; and from that time to this no question in India is judged on its merits, but simply as a question of race against race. One of the difficulties of the present Government is to allay the race feeling which Lord Ripon aroused. The hon. baronet says that the educated classes in India are the best friends of British rule. That is true of them generally; but the leaders with whom the hon. baronet associates, are they so favourable to British rule? Do they show it by their words and their beliefs? (Cheers.) There was recently a meeting in London connected with the movement of which the hon. baronet is the head, and a resolution, moved by an educated Native, was passed attributing all evils from which India had been suffering mainly to the unrighteous and iniquitous system of government. ("Hear, hear," from Mr. Davitt.) Of course, the hon. member is an opponent of British rule, and I can understand his cheer. But I do not understand how the hon. baronet, who has been a member of the Indian Civil Service, reconciles himself to language of that kind. (Cheers.) And it is a certain class of educated Natives, who make use of their position to instil such grotesque falsehoods into the rising generation, who are doing so much mischief. The hon. baronet must assimilate his language inside the House to his language outside the House, or I must judge him by the words he uses outside. (Cheers.) So far as the mass of the people of India are concerned there is not that lack of confidence in the intentions of the Government with regard to the famine which the hon. baronet suggests. I believe that by removing some of the malignant influences which aroused the people in opposition to our measures, by which alone can the plague be fought, those measures will be effective in Bombay. As regards the agricultural population, I have, in concert with the Viceroy, appointed a commission who will go through the provinces, and I have no doubt will make a valuable report as to how far the people of India are now better or worse able than before to meet the famine. As regards legislation, the Government are only waiting for a quiet time to con-

sider a number of proposals for the purpose of freeing the people as far as possible from the influence of the money-lenders. I hope we will be able to set up some system of local banks for the assistance of the Natives, and we will also consider whether we cannot apply generally some principles by which the alienation of land will be made less easy than it is at present. I mention these matters to show that the Indian Government realise that it is desirable to look into the economic condition of the people and that they will not fail to do so. (Cheers.) As regards Mr. Tilak, I have been informed that his health is fairly good, that he is not put to hard labour, and that he receives a special diet. I have only to say, in conclusion, that I think I have shown that the Indian Government are prepared to associate with an expression of sympathy with the sufferings of the mass of the people of India acts which will be for the amelioration and the strengthening of their position to meet any difficulties which may arise in the future. (Cheers.)

Mr. MORLEY: I have no intention of disputing the proposition of the noble lord, that the Government of India is doing its very best to discharge the duties and the enormous responsibility that fall upon it. But I must protest against the gratuitous, wanton, and uncalled-for language used by the noble lord about my noble friend Lord Ripon. (Cheers.) There was no occasion whatever for that attack (Cheers.) It did not arise in the slightest degree from the matter to which my hon. friend below the gangway called attention, and when the noble lord makes a rash and random proposition such as that Lord Ripon's conduct was the source of racial antagonism——

Lord G. HAMILTON: Hear, hear. So it was.

Mr. MORLEY: The noble lord may hold that view, but he should not express it in that rash and random way.

Lord G. HAMILTON: Why not?

Mr. MORLEY: Because it is not in the least relevant to the amendment. (Cheers.) The noble lord ought to have brought it forward in a deliberate manner and in connexion with some subject, so that we might defend Lord Ripon, if he needs defence. (Cheers.) There are plenty of things to be said against the excessive language, which the noble lord has permitted himself to use, and if the noble lord, in a full House and on a relevant occasion, repeats that language he will find that he will not escape a punishment somewhat similar to that which he received the other night. (Loud cheers and Ministerial laughter.)

The amendment was then by leave withdrawn.

On the motion of Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS the debate was adjourned.

Friday, February 18.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS.
MR. HERBERT ROBERTS'S AMENDMENT.
THE POLICY OF REPRESSION IN INDIA.

The debate on the Address was resumed by Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS, who moved to add:—"And we humbly assure your Majesty that this House regards with grave concern the policy of internal repression lately adopted by the Government of India, and especially the deportation and continued imprisonment of British Indian subjects without trial, the recent series of press prosecutions, and the present proposals to increase the severity of the law relating to sedition in India." He said that in moving this amendment he felt that there was no apology needed for bringing the questions to which it referred before the House at the earliest possible opportunity. It was known to all and admitted in every quarter that India had during the past few months passed through a grave crisis. When such a calamitous state of things arose in any portion of Her Majesty's dominion it was clearly the duty of the House of Commons, which was ultimately responsible for the administration of the Empire, to give these matters serious consideration. He disclaimed any desire to discuss the issue in a party spirit, or from a political standpoint; and would rather urge that the nature and extent of the appalling calamities which had recently befallen India required them to make a determined effort to abandon the methods of controversy usually inevitable in political warfare, and to unite as those who were responsible for a great Empire, and not as party politicians, in considering the present Indian situation, and in stating their views as to the wisdom of the present home policy of the Government of India. The present calamities were unprecedented in their severity. The famine, in regard to the area affected, had been worse than any famine previously known. The plague had half depopulated the largest cities of the Western Presidency, and, in spite of all the measures taken, seemed to be growing worse and to be spreading to the Deccan and the Punjab. The earthquakes in Bengal and Assam had resulted in the loss of thousands of lives. All these things had unsettled the mind of the Indian people. The steps taken during the plague for segregating the zenana women, however necessary in themselves, and other methods adopted for medical purposes, had stirred the Oriental mind to an extent not known in recent times in India. Under all the circumstances, therefore, they found the people of India in a state of alarm and uncertainty, and it would obviously be the wise policy to soothe the mind of the country rather than irritate it by coercive measures and repressive legislation. (Cheers.) From the reports received from India it was plain also that the feeling of alarm was becoming one of despair, and it was inevitable that this should be so when, in addition to the calamities referred to, the Indian people were made the victims of an unwise and unsympathetic Government policy. He submitted that whatever were the merits or the demerits of this policy, this was a singularly inopportune time to enforce it. The first point raised by the amendment was the deportation and continued imprisonment without trial of British Indian subjects. The case was the imprisonment without trial of the Natu brothers. The facts were not disputed. These men were suddenly, in July last, arrested in their house at Poona. They belonged to a highly respected family, whose ancestors rendered important services to the Government in the past, and one of them was a first-class Sirdar of the Deccan. The Secretary of State for India, in a debate in this House in August last, took upon himself the responsibility of this step, and further intimated that this action would lead to the unravelling of the conspiracy which resulted in the lamented loss of the lives of Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst. Since then another man, Chapekar, had confessed his guilt in this matter, and had been condemned to death. This fanatic's evidence clearly proved that the Natu brothers were not in any way implicated in the plot, and yet they were still imprisoned. It might be said that this imprisonment without trial was ordered under a recognised Act, that of 1827, passed more than seventy years ago; but that Act was passed to meet a condition of things wholly different from the present state of India. The next point referred to in the amendment was the action of the Indian Government in reference to press prosecutions. There had been several prosecutions, but one of them, that of Tilak, the editor of the *Kesari*, had attracted unusual attention. The case had been before the Privy Council, and, so far as the judgment given was concerned, was closed; but the influence of the conviction still operated upon the mind of India. The freedom of the Press in India, as elsewhere, had proved to be the bulwark of the Government. It enabled them to know—and they had no other means of knowing—the feelings and views of the people of India with regard to the Government measures and administration. It was the means by which practical defects in measures were disclosed, and it also served to purify Government by bringing the light of public opinion to bear upon the action of the subordinate officials. In India without representative government it played the part, so far as it could do so, played by the elected members of Parliament in other countries. To pursue a policy of criminal prosecution against Indian newspapers could only have the effect of stopping the free expression of Native opinion as to Indian administration, and the grievances would remain unknown and unredressed. This was bound, if the policy were persisted in, to lead to undesirable results. (Hear, hear.) Turning to the changes which the Government of India propose to introduce into the law of sedition, he said that in July last, as the House would remember, the leader of the Opposition asked the Secretary of State for India if he would give the House an opportunity of considering and of discussing any alteration in the Indian press law before it was passed. The reply was that the Indian Government was responsible for the maintenance of law and order in that country, and that the Indian Government must have the initiation of Indian measures, but that their action could be reviewed by Parliament afterwards. What had been done? It had not been the revival of the Press Act of Lord Lytton, which gave the Government the power to stop any newspaper which in their opinion misbehaved itself—an Act which was almost immediately repealed by the Liberal Government. The proposed new measure was not for the special regulation of the Press, but would have the effect of modifying the general criminal law of India in a manner far more fatal, in the opinion of the Indian papers, to the interests of the Press than Lord Lytton's Act would have done. The result of the new law, if passed, would be to open up an endless vista of prosecutions all over the country against newspapers which the local magistrate might suspect to be guilty of the very vague offence of "disaffection." It would be manifestly out of place to refer in any detail to the legal aspect of the proposed changes, but he might put before the House very shortly the main considerations involved. Practically, then, the proposals of the Indian Government meant, first, that the salutary explanation drawn up by Sir Fitzjames Stephen as to what constituted "disaffection" within the meaning of Section 124A of the Penal Code had been expunged, and another explanation inserted giving a new meaning to the word "disaffection," and leaving it dangerously vague; and, secondly, that offences under this section were in future to be triable, not as at present only by the Court of Sessions or the High Court, but by all magistrates of the first class. The effect of this new provision would be realised when it was considered that practically all young civilians after two or three years' experience in India become first-class magistrates. Another drastic change proposed by the Government was that Section 109 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which gave Presidency magistrates, district magistrates, and magistrates of the first-class the power to demand from loafers, intending criminals, and suspicious characters a bond with sureties for good behaviour for a period not exceeding six months, was to be extended to those who were suspected of attempting to disseminate seditious matter. The effect of this, if carried, would be to place the editors of the newspapers of India at the mercy of the magistrates. The views he had endeavoured to express were fully corroborated by the press of India, both English and Native, including the *Statesman*, *Indian Daily News*, *Morning Post*, *Hindu Patriot*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, and *The Englishman*. It was idle for the House of Commons to ignore this feeling. The great principles upon which the Government of India had been carried on in the past were being reversed, and the effect of this would be to produce discontent where discontent had not previously prevailed, to create the impression that the path of progress along which the Government had travelled on liberal principles in the past was to be abandoned, and to make it difficult for the people of India to look forward to attaining upon constitutional lines those reforms on which we had by the lesson of English civilisation taught them to set their minds. (Opposition cheers.)

Sir J. LENG formally seconded the amendment.

Lord G. HAMILTON said that the hon. and learned gentleman had in an able and temperate speech called the attention of the House to a matter which was well worthy of their attention. He would endeavour to reply in the tone the hon. member adopted, and he thought he could give conclusive reasons for the action which the Government of India and the Government of Bombay had been compelled to take. The hon. gentleman assumed that the Government of India wished to resort to repression and coercion. There was really no such intention. (Hear, hear.) It was very easy for gentlemen in the secure atmosphere of the House of Commons to find fault with a Government at the other end of the world, but let them transplant themselves to Bombay and recognise the conditions with which the Government of Bombay had to deal. One of the best descriptions given of India was that of Sir John Malcolm, who, on being congratulated on

having quieted the country, said, "Yes, India is quiet, quiet as gunpowder." Any hon. member who had any acquaintance with India knew that there were there stored up explosive materials, in the shape of racial hatred and religious animosity, which at any moment might blaze out, and it was essential for the Government of that country to have behind it, for the purpose of dealing with emergencies, some exceptional powers. It was equally necessary that these exceptional powers should be used with the utmost caution and only in exceptional circumstances. (Hear, hear.) The plague was not yet stamped out. He was not exaggerating when he said that, if the regulations of the Bombay Government were rendered ineffective by local intrigue or by stirring up discontent and the disease got the upper hand of the authorities, the march of the plague through India would cause more devastation and loss of life than the march of an hostile army. Therefore, the Government had a clear and paramount duty to perform, and if clear and indisputable evidence was placed before them that certain persons, even in high stations, were traitors to the efforts to combat the plague, they were bound to act accordingly. The first point dealt with by the hon. and learned member was the imprisonment of the brothers Natu. For some time past there had been a great deal of disturbance in the Deccan. The movement was obviously seditious in its character, and in almost every case it could be traced back to Poona, and, ultimately, to a limited section of persons in that town. So long as the Bombay Government had to deal with an ordinary state of affairs it was not necessary for them to take any special notice of what unquestionably was now proved to be a small but well-organised conspiracy. But when they had to deal with the plague the situation assumed a different aspect. It was assumed that the brothers Natu gave great assistance to the Bombay Government, but that was not the opinion of the authorities. The brothers Natu did everything in their power to stir up unrest, and they worked against the regulations, the enforcement of which could alone save the people. After the murder of Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst the Government were put in possession of evidence of a serious plot. If there was an idea among the Native population that under the British regulations their women would be subjected to any indignity a storm would have arisen which would have made it hopeless to apply the regulations. It was necessary, therefore, to secure a number of lady nurses and doctors to assist in the search operations. There was a great difficulty in getting the nurses, but at last the Government secured a sufficient number. One of these nurses made a deposition that she had received a letter purporting to be signed by one of the brothers Natu, stating that it would be greatly to her detriment if she worked with the search party. Since receiving this letter she persisted in working in the search operations, and she had not had a midwifery case in the city in consequence, although previously she frequently was called in. The difficulty the Indian Government had to contend with was the subtlety of these malign influences, and there was no law at their disposal to stop intimidation of that character. There was a still more serious case, in which one of the brothers Natu had attempted in a most assiduous way to induce the police to declare that a woman who had really died from disease had been violated by a British soldier, and had died in consequence. In dealing with a crisis of such magnitude as the plague, if they found these tricks played the Government had a right to prevent such men from being at large. (Cheers.) The Government had only taken this exceptional action with the greatest reluctance. So long as the plague lasted it would not be safe to liberate the brothers Natu. In reference to the trial of certain gentlemen connected with the Press, he would point out that Tilak's articles were a clear incitement to assassination. As to when his term of imprisonment should terminate, he was not prepared to interfere with the discretion of the Bombay Government. With regard to the proposed alterations in the law, it had been admitted for eighteen years past by Viceroys and Secretaries of State for India that the particular clause which dealt with sedition should be remodelled. The changes in the law which were now proposed merely put in plain and unambiguous language the interpretation which had recently been given by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to Section 124A of the old code. He was informed by his legal advisers that the law was practically unaltered, and that in fact the law of sedition in India and in England was almost identical. The only other alterations were those proposed in the Criminal Procedure Bill, which was an amending and consolidating Bill of some 500 or 600 clauses, and in which power is given to magistrates to deal with what he might call seditious newsmongers and blackmailers—which was very much wanted in India. But in every case there was the safeguard of an appeal to the court above, and the local Government would have to take action before this clause was put into operation. He did not believe, from what he heard, that the mass of Native gentlemen, or educated opinion, except those connected with the Press, objected to the alterations. On the contrary, the Mahometan Literary Society of Calcutta, which represented Mahometan feeling in its best form both there and throughout India, approved of what was being done. And he knew, from conversation with almost every distinguished man who came back from India with long experience, that Native gentlemen looked with the utmost regret on the attitude of what was called the tolerance of the British Government to scandalous writers, because they said in an Oriental community that attitude of tolerance was interpreted by the Natives as an attitude of approval. He could assure the hon. gentleman that there was not the slightest intention or wish to silence or curb the Native Press. What he really believed was wanted was not so much restraint as guidance—a line given as to what was a proper and legitimate form of criticism—and he believed that this alteration of the law would in every sense be beneficial, and he could guarantee that, so long as he had anything to do with it, it should be carried out with the utmost leniency. This law was now under the consideration of the Legislative Council who had certain duties to perform, and he thought it was inadvisable that they should, in those circumstances, discuss its details, because it was obvious that the effect of that discussion must influence, and perhaps prejudice, the men whose duty it was either to assent or dissent. When their opinions came home to the Secretary of State, if it was desired that they should be published, he would at once do so, and that would form a legitimate and proper opportunity for discussing the matter.

Mr. Maclean asked the noble lord if he would do that before giving his assent to the Bill.

Lord G. Hamilton said that would be transferring a responsibility which rested now upon the Secretary of State to the House of Commons, and he thought that would be most unwise. He could assure the hon. member who moved the motion that he entirely reciprocated the sentiments which he expressed as regarded the severe crisis through which India was passing, and he hoped they were approaching an epoch of comparative quiet and prosperity. The Bombay Government had shown great courage in facing the dangers which confronted them. Upon them rested the paramount duty of devoting all their energies to the extirpation of this horrible disease, and so long as the House knew they were honestly and courageously performing that duty and utilizing every means at their disposal with propriety and caution he did not think they would be disposed to censure that Government. (Cheers.)

Mr. Macneill said that the English Government in India was, on the noble lord's own confession, a corrupt Government. He reviewed the circumstances attending the deportation of the brothers Natu and the prosecution of Tilak, and declared his belief that the prosecution in the latter case was initiated by the Government at home.

Lord G. Hamilton denied this was so; the prosecution was initiated by the Bombay Government.

Mr. Macneill said it was in July that in giving an answer in the House the noble lord condemned the newspaper articles as calculated to excite disturbances, and Tilak was not tried till September 15; the man was prejudged long before his arrest. The whole proceedings illustrated the corrupt judicial system with which both Ireland and India were familiar.

Mr. J. M. Maclean said he should be extremely reluctant to say anything which would add in the slightest degree to the many anxieties and responsibilities which must have weighed down the Secretary of State for India during the last twelve months. He certainly did not intend to follow the hon. member opposite into a discussion as to the general merits of British rule in India. Of British rule in India he had always been a great admirer. He believed it had conferred inestimable benefits on the people of India. When the hon. member denounced British rule in India he should like to have asked him what kind of rule he would substitute for it if it were taken away. (Hear, hear.) He was himself connected for many years with the Press in India, and he thought he ought not to allow a debate on a question of this kind to pass without taking part in it. The noble lord had said that they wanted exceptional powers in India. His opinion was that they had enough exceptional powers already. As a general rule, he did not believe that the Press of India was extremely violent or unfair in the comments it made upon the government of the country. But, of course, the Native Press was an immature press, directed by men of small means, and very often of small intelligence. It might do very idle and vicious things from time to time, but the Government possessed very ample power for dealing with offences of that kind. (Hear, hear.) The sentences passed upon recent offenders had been severe enough not only to punish these men, but to frighten others from committing similar offences. Some of the sentences had been so severe that they had shocked public opinion in this country. (Opposition cheers.) And yet we were going to have more repressive legislation directed against these Native newspapers. Lord Lytton had tried this repressive method, and it had failed. It was said that these repressive measures were only to give a guiding influence to the Native Press, to guide it in the right direction. He thought that newspapers which were "directed" into their proper course and not allowed to express their own opinions became absolutely worthless. The only object of a newspaper was to express free opinion. (Hear, hear.) Naturally, that law of Lord Lytton's fell into great contempt and was discontinued by general consent. We were going to make the law more repressive than it was, and we were saying to-day to the Native Press: "You must not only obey the laws of the country, but you must be affectionate in your disposition towards the Government." He thought a wise Government ought to be satisfied with demanding obedience from the people, without trying to control their secret thoughts. (Hear, hear.) What would happen supposing this regulation was applied in the House of Commons? (Laughter.) Everyone knew they all in that House looked with extreme reverence at the right hon. gentlemen who occupied the two Front Benches. (Renewed laughter.) It was an idea of Plato's that in some region or other the perfection of wisdom was to be found. He had always thought that Plato must have had some premonition of the two Front Benches of the British House of Commons. (Great laughter.) Supposing these right hon. gentlemen on these two Front Benches were not content with making their followers go into the lobbies at the crack of the party whip, but were to tell hon. members that they were not to express their own views in the House or out of it. Then hon. gentlemen would soon feel that their presence in Parliament was not of much value either to the public or themselves. (Hear, hear.) We were attempting to stifle free opinion in India. Did the Government imagine that by muzzling the Press they would be able to put down public opinion? Why, India was one great whispering gallery, where everything was passed from mouth to mouth with wonderful celerity. To succeed they must stop the universities, stop the running of railway trains, and cut the telegraph wires. (Loud Opposition cheers.) The task was an impossible one. (Hear, hear.) Let the Government have a little more courage and a little more belief in the power and resource of the English people to put down any sedition that might arise. He urged them not to legislate in a panic, or to try to put down sedition by means which would never avail in any country. The hon. gentleman concluded: You can govern India by your justice, by your generosity, and in case of need by force of your arms, but you will never do it by preventing the free expression of opinion amongst that great community. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Pickersgill strongly condemned the indecent haste with which

the Bills were being forced through the Legislative Council in spite of the protests of the Native members. The Secretary for India had stated that the proposals had been for four months under public consideration. This statement was most misleading. It was true that the Criminal Procedure Code Bill was introduced on the 14th October, but the most obnoxious provisions were not contained in the original Bill, and no one knew anything about them until the 21st December, when Mr. Chalmers stated in the Legislative Council the intention of the Government to insert them in Committee. He denied that the new Section 124A of the Penal Code represented the actual, current law of this country on the subject. It was idle at this time of day to set forth the language of Lord Kenyon, used more than one hundred years ago, and to pretend that *that* was the existing law of sedition in England. The charges of Mr. Justice Cave in *R. v. Burns* and of Mr. Justice Fitzgerald in *R. v. Sullivan* showed that in England and even in Ireland at the present day the gist of the offence of sedition was incitement to public disorder, or to resist the lawful authority of the Government. But be the law of sedition in England what it might, the real safeguards here for freedom of speech were the force of public opinion and the institution of the jury. (Cheers.) Since the close of the great controversy which culminated in the passing of Fox's famous Libel Act in 1792, it had been the province of the jury in England to pronounce upon the seditious intention, as well as upon every other ingredient of the offence. But in India public opinion, in our sense of the words, did not exist; and it was now proposed that magistrates should be empowered to try cases of sedition. That was a peculiarly odious extension of the system, already for many years condemned by all unprejudiced minds alike in England and in India, under which administrative and judicial functions were united in the same person. (Cheers.) The very officer whose policy had been criticised, and perhaps (with perfect justice and propriety) severely handled, was to be judge in his own cause. They had been told across the floor by the Attorney-General that there was an appeal. He was glad to hear that. But the appeal was not to a jury, but only to another Court; and even if the decision given by the magistrate were eventually reversed, they had to consider the alarm and harassment which would be caused by the original proceeding. In connexion with this part of the case, he was not at all reassured by the observations made by Mr. Chalmers in the Legislative Council. Mr. Chalmers said: "In most cases no prosecution will be required. It will be sufficient to give them an effective warning to discontinue their evil practices, and we think that the machinery we have devised will operate as an effective warning." He admired the irony of Mr. Chalmers's observations; he had no doubt that the machinery would be effective, but effective for what? To destroy the freedom and spontaneity of the Native Press, and thus to deprive the administrators of India of the one means which they now possess to ascertain the real feelings and dispositions of the people. The Government had the power to sanction this obnoxious legislation, just as a former Conservative Government had sanctioned the Vernacular Press Act; but in like manner as one of the first acts of Lord Ripon's administration had been to repeal that measure, so it would be the duty of the noble lord's successor to repeal the obnoxious laws which were now proposed. (Cheers.)

Dr. Clark expressed the greatest astonishment at the reasons given by the noble lord for the imprisonment of the brothers Natu, and contended that the action of the Bombay Government was illegal. The noble lord said there was a great deal of unrest in India owing to growing fanaticism, but he was doing his best, by his policy and by his speech the previous night, to increase that unrest. The noble lord also attacked the Indian Congress, which was composed of the educated natives of India, on which he believed we must mainly rely for loyalty to the Throne. He would say nothing about Tilak, who had been tried and condemned. He might be a martyr. If so, when he was released he would be in a favourable position with his fellow-countrymen, just as some Irish members of Parliament who had been in prison in the past were now getting the benefit of their actions in the past.—(Mr. Swift MacNeill and Mr. Davitt: "No, no," followed by great laughter.)

Mr. Davitt said the statement of the hon. member illustrated the saying about his countrymen, that they were not capable of seeing a joke. (Laughter.) Irish members never thought they were being rewarded by being members of Parliament in consequence of having dwelt elsewhere in years gone by. (Laughter.) He took a different view of it, and looked upon it as the continuation of a punishment not too richly deserved. (Laughter.) He frequently sighed while seated helpless on those benches for the days when, instead of vainly trying to make laws, he built up a lasting reputation in North Devonshire as a stone-breaker. (Laughter.) The manly sentiments expressed by Mr. Maclean in that debate would, if given effect to in India, be more beneficial to their rule in India and be better for the people of this country than the pro-Russian views of the noble lord, and that would, he believed, be the opinion of the country. He maintained that when the proceedings connected with these prosecutions in India were published the consensus of opinion in this country would be in favour of the views of the hon. member for Cardiff and against those of the Government. The policy now being carried out in India was more worthy the despotism of Russia than the boasted love of constitutional liberty cherished by the English people. The noble lord had declaimed against the violence of the Native Press in India, but he had been well answered by the hon. member for Cardiff. The chief offence of the Native Press seemed to be that it was not too full of affection for the noble lord. In his opinion no language he had read in any Native newspaper had been so incendiary as the language used in this House by the noble lord. Last night, *apropos* of nothing at all, the noble lord went out of his way to attack a man who was known in India as having been the most popular Governor-General.

Lord G. Hamilton: I did not attack him. I only said I did not agree with the eulogies expressed by Sir. W. Wedderburn.

Mr. Davitt said that if the noble lord had not been Secretary for India his remarks might not have been noticed, but——

The Speaker: It is not in order to deal in a lengthy manner with a previous debate on a previous question in the same Session.

Mr. Davitt said he admired the fighting qualities of the noble lord, which came from the race to which he belonged—(laughter)—and who became intemperate through having too much authority. (Laughter) He was bound to say the noble lord knew how to fight his corner as well as any man in the House. (Laughter.) At the same time he must add that he utterly disapproved the noble lord's policy. He asked the Government to say whether or not there was any foundation for the statement in the *Westminster Gazette* of the 3rd February, that the man who confessed to the murders was offered a large sum to confess. He sincerely hoped for the benefit of the people of India and the credit of the Government there that the noble lord would take the manly advice of the hon. member for Cardiff. (Cheers.)

The Attorney-General (Sir Richard Webster) said that the Secretary for India had not seen the statement, and knew nothing about the charge. He could not take the view of the member for Caithness that the action against the Natu brothers was illegal. There was a terrible scourge and plague raging in Bombay. To cope with it it necessitated personal examination at an important stage. It was admitted that this might be repugnant to Native feeling, and therefore it would require possibly stern, but certainly calm and steady rule in order to carry it into effect. It was brought before the attention of her Majesty's representatives on the spot, rightly or wrongly, that there was an organisation to prevent these precautionary measures being taken. He could not conceive anything more likely to promote internal commotion than friction between the authorities and those poor persons who, for their own good, were going to be subjected to supervision or treatment. It was of the essence of the jurisdiction exercised under the orders that it must be exercised in cases in which you could not in many instances bring the person to trial—the jurisdiction ought to be most sparingly used—and therefore it was no argument against the action of the Government to say they had not dared to bring those persons to trial. As strongly corroborating the view that the action of the authorities was justified his noble friend permitted him to mention that since the arrest of the Natus, the opposition had diminished in a remarkable degree, and that there was now very little difficulty in carrying out the sanitary regulations essential to the staying of the plague.

Dr. Clark asked whether it was not the case that within the last few weeks there had been riots and officers murdered.

The Attorney-General said he had merely, in answer to appeals made to him, to give specific answers to specific questions. He had no particular knowledge on the point just put, but he submitted that it had been clearly shown that the authorities acted with a full sense of their responsibility, and they were thankful that their action had been successful in so far as the agitation had declined. At the hearing of the appeal against the judgment of Mr. Justice Strachey, Lord Davey, Lord Hobhouse, and Sir Richard Couch were present, so that there could be no ground for the suggestion which had been made in some quarters that the decision was not based simply on sound legal principles. As to the Press prosecutions, the only case brought forward had been the Tilak case. He had read the whole of Mr. Justice Strachey's summing up in that case, and he found nothing new in it, but a reasonable and sensible exposition of the law and its application. He must traverse entirely the view of the hon. member for Cardiff that the object and effect of the proposed alterations of the law were the muzzling of the Press. No one could deny the authority with which the hon. member spoke; but if the hon. member had had an opportunity of studying the proposed alterations he could not have come to the conclusion which he had stated. The amendments were only intended to make clear that which had been the law ever since the Penal Code was passed. They might or might not be desirable, but they certainly had not the intention, nor would they have the effect, of curtailing or interfering with the liberty of the Press. Though he had not seen the whole of the amended code, he was informed that it contained some 600 clauses. The hon. member who moved the amendment seemed to think that the proposed alteration with respect to appeals had a special reference to the law of sedition. This was entirely a mistake. The change would have a general application, and not any special application whatever to the law of sedition. These proposed alterations were still under consideration, and it would be very wrong if the House, on the materials now before it, should attempt to influence the judgment of those who had the responsibility of deciding, in the first place, what amendments in the law were desirable. If the changes were not thought desirable, the present Secretary of State or his successor could disapprove of them; but the consideration must, in the first place, rest with the Legislative Council in India; and the great majority of hon. members would admit that it was not desirable that the House should engage in a preliminary discussion of proposals which were still being considered by those who had the greatest experience and the greatest responsibility. The House had not the materials on which to base a decision as to what amendments in the law should be made. He could not agree that, according to the present law of sedition, there must be incitement to disturbance of the peace. That great man Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, who knew as much of the Indian law as he did of the English, described sedition as "inciting any person to commit any crime in disturbance of the peace, or to raise discontent or disaffection among her Majesty's subjects, or to promote ill-will and hostility between different classes of her Majesty's subjects." Remembering the different creeds and races in India, no one who had ever studied the question would contend that there was less necessity for such a law in India than in England; and yet that was the law in England to-day. The discussion had shown that the changes suggested across the floor of the House last year by hon. members, and referred to again with pride that day, were not likely to facilitate the task of the Indian Government. He would not refer to the attack made in a committee-room and afterwards apologised for.

Sir W. Wedderburn: If the Attorney-General says that I suggested any charge of that sort, I must state that it is quite untrue. Professor Gokhale had stated that certain charges had been made in

Poona, and we said that they ought to be investigated. To say that I made any charge whatever is to say what is false.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that he was not referring to any charges made by the hon. baronet. He was referring to the charges suggested in questions by other hon. members and referred to again in this debate. He hoped he had shown to the House that neither the Indian Government nor her Majesty's Government had infringed any of those rules of conduct by which they ought to be actuated.

The House then divided, when the numbers were :—

For the amendment	109
Against	182
Majority against	73

Tuesday, February 22.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PETITIONS PRESENTED.

East India (Contagious Diseases).—Petitions against State regulation. From Leeds (two), Wallasey, Harborne, Edgbaston, Birmingham, and Edinburgh. To lie upon the Table.

THE WAR BEYOND THE FRONTIER.
PETITION FOR BRITISH CONTRIBUTION.

Mr. S. SMITH desired to present a petition from a public meeting held at Bombay, signed by the chairman, expressing alarm at the growing military expenditure of India, especially on the North-West frontier, stating that India was not able to bear this expenditure, that much of it was for Imperial purposes rather than Indian, and asking the House to relieve the Indian Treasury of a substantial portion, if not the entire charges, of the recent expenditure incurred in the war beyond the Indian frontier.

The SPEAKER: I will not ask the hon. member to bring that petition to the Table, because it is out of order. It proposes to deal with public money and taxation, which is against the orders of the House.

THE INDIAN MINTS.

Sir WILLIAM HOULDSWORTH asked the Secretary of State for India, what additions to the debt of India by sterling and by silver borrowings respectively had been made since the closing of the Mints in June, 1893.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The net additions to the debt of India since the closing of the Mints in June, 1893, are (1) by sterling borrowings £16,696,766; and (2) by silver borrowings Rx. 8,602,401. I should add that during that period the capital outlay in railway and irrigation works was over £4,400,000 in England and Rx. 16,000,000 in India.

HEALTH OF THE TROOPS.

Major RASCH asked the Under-Secretary of State for War, whether he could state the number of men in the Irish Fusiliers who were unfit for service, through contagious disease, on their arrival in Egypt from India in January.

Mr. BRODRICK: Ninety-two men of the 1st Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers were found unfit for active service through venereal disease when the battalion was inspected at Alexandria on February 7.

THE POVERTY OF INDIA.
NEED OF EFFECTIVE FINANCIAL CONTROL.
THE COST OF THE WAR BEYOND THE FRONTIER.

Mr. S. SMITH rose to call attention to the extreme poverty of the mass of the people of India, to the serious condition of the Indian finances, and to the need of a more effective control over Indian expenditure, and to move—"That in the opinion of this House the expenditure involved in the recent operations beyond the frontier of India ought not to be charged entirely upon the revenues of India." He said that at no time since the Mutiny had there been such a deep and widespread discontent in India. The prosecutions of the Press and the Bill now pending to restrict its liberty showed the anxiety of the Indian Government, and he was sure that no more urgent matter could be brought before Parliament. The poverty of the Indian people, even in the best of years, was excessive. This chronic condition had been aggravated by the awful famine of last year. Great numbers of the cultivators had lost everything; their cattle had died; they had had to sell their farm implements; they were hopelessly in debt; and unless the Government dealt very leniently with them this coming year they would suffer about as much as in the year of famine. Yet the land assessment was being raised in those very provinces. A fresh settlement occurred last year in the Central Provinces, and a large increase of assessment took place. An appeal was made in the Viceroy's Council to suspend this extra assessment for another year, but this was refused. There could be no real prosperity in India till a permanent settlement of the land tax was made all over India, and till the cultivator knew that the improvements he made would be his own. The deficit for this year could not be less than five millions if the accounts were honestly made up. If adequate remissions were made to the peasantry in the famine districts the deficit would, he believed, be nearer ten millions than five. He spoke of tens of rupees, which might be called Indian pounds. This was not all. There was the excessive danger of the attempt to introduce a gold standard into India For five years the Mints had been closed to silver, and the rupee had been forced up to 1s. 4d. by the double operation of starving the currency in India and making money so scarce that 10 or 12 per cent. was now the rate of interest in Calcutta and Bombay, against 3 per cent. in England; and secondly, by postponing the payment of the debt due to England, which was about fifteen millions sterling annually, Council bills were being drawn far below the usual rate, and probably four or five millions sterling would be borrowed this financial year in this country and added to the Indian gold debt. He called this juggling with the finances. The fact was the Indian Government was on the horns of a dilemma. If it raised the rupee to save the loss on exchange it caused a money famine in India and terribly reduced the rupee value of the uncoined silver in India. If it let the rupee fall by drawing its full quota of Council bills, it increased its loss on exchange and added to the alarming deficit in the Budget. He feared the Government was too much influenced by the desire to present a fair Budget statement. It was not alive to the great suffering this contraction of currency was causing in India. As a further branch of the question, he asked the House to remember that the amount of uncoined silver in India was enormous, probably some hundred millions. Up till five years ago this could all be turned into rupees by taking it to the Mint. Now it had fallen to 40 per cent. below the coined rupee. It was only worth 10d. in bulk, whereas the rupee was worth 1s. 4d. To the masses of India it seemed as if the Government had confiscated their property. The Government was verging on bankruptcy; yet it could not impose more taxation without risking rebellion. It ought to lower, not raise, the land assessment. It ought to lower, not raise, the cruel salt tax, which was now sixteen or twenty times the prime cost of the article. Much of the discontent of the frontier tribes arose from suddenly raising the Kohat salt duty four-fold, bringing it up to thirty-two times the first cost of the article. Our system of government was far too expensive for so poor a people. We had squandered sixty or seventy millions on the North-West frontier in the last twenty years. We had raised the cost of the army in the same time from sixteen millions to twenty-four millions. The military party was ruining India in preparing against an imaginary Russian invasion many years hence. It was drying up the resources of the people and poisoning their minds against British rule. His resolution was but a feeble palliative. What was wanted was an entire reconstruction of the whole system of Indian administration. A handful of officials at Simla could not satisfactorily govern 280 millions of people, even with the aid of the finest Civil Service in the world. India needed the strongest financier this country could send out, armed with great power to cut down expenditure. Till it could obtain that our Exchequer must come to its aid, which it could well do, as we had had surpluses of nearly seven millions the last two years, and should probably have another surplus of two or three millions on the present financial year. Surely it was better to use this money in helping our famishing fellow-subjects in India than in buying up Consols at the rate of 112. There was not a doubt, he believed, that public opinion would sanction a grant, and a large grant, from the British Exchequer. (Cheers.)

Mr. SOUTTAR seconded the motion. He did so, in the first place, upon the ground of the poverty of the Indian people. Hon. members who had not lived in India could have no conception of the poverty existing there. It was not poverty which sprang from idleness or dissipation, but work as a man would he could not earn enough in a day to provide one full meal for himself and his family. In the second place, he seconded the motion on the ground of the poverty of the Indian Exchequer. Even if the next Budget disclosed a surplus there would not be half enough to spend upon the public works which India required. Millions ought to be spent if the country was to be properly insured against famine. He did not believe irrigation was a cure for all the evils in India, but irrigation was necessary. Furthermore, if India ever needed help she needed it to-day. She had been visited by famine and pestilence. Europeans, who were well fed, were rarely touched by pestilence, but the poor, miserable Native was so absolutely starved that he had no vitality, and the moment pestilence touched him he simply lay down and died. A fourth plea in favour of the motion arose from the justice of the case. The Indians were promised in the statute of 1858 that India should not be in any way dragged into any question of Imperial policy. He did not say that the present frontier war was a purely Imperial matter, but no conscientious man could say that Imperial matters did not to some extent enter into the question. To that extent, he maintained, we were bound to absolve India from the cost of the war. Finally, there were precedents in favour of the course his hon. friend advocated. He did not believe in doles, but if ever there was an occasion when strict economical justice might be departed from that occasion had now arisen. He was persuaded that no voice would be raised in this country against the adoption of the motion, and that, on the other hand, if the House did what his hon. friend suggested, it would afford untold pleasure and happiness in India. (Cheers.)

Sir SEYMOUR KING said that, although he thought something ought to be done, in his opinion they could not do worse than start a series of grants in aid. (Hear, hear.)

Sir W. WEDDERBURN said he thought his hon. friend had done right to ask for this contribution, and that the Government could not continue to refuse it. From the Suakin case it had been shown that in financial dealings with India the conscience of the nation could be touched, and the nation would not allow the whole burden of this great war to be placed on poor prostrate India. (Hear, hear.) A substantial contribution should be given, if it were only from mere pity. India was now crippled in her resources, and such a practical mark of sympathy would help her to revive and struggle to her feet. He asked for a dole, but he did not like a system of doles. He did not think India liked doles. What she most wanted was not charity but fair play, to enable her to develop her boundless resources. But she could not develop her resources without economy in administration, and economy in administration could not be obtained except through vigorous control by the House of Commons. (Cheers.) If India were allowed to develop her great resources there would be abundant wealth both for her own people and for the people of this country. This country and India were bound to stand together or fall together. And had there ever in history been a grander partnership, with more magnificent assets? Great Britain had the command of the sea, and the lead in Western civilisation; and she could give to India the *Pax Britannica* with the arts and sciences and progress of the West. On the other hand India brought to the partnership 300 millions of an ancient race, great both in peace and war, a great agricultural community which could supply every form of raw produce to British workshops, and give a market for her manufactures equal to all the world besides. (Hear, hear.) The hon. mover had said the people of India were

extremely poor. That was true now, but it need not be so always, and it ought not to be. No doubt the mass of the peasantry were terribly destitute, without store or reserve of food, money. or credit. They not only had nothing, but much less than nothing, being as a class hopelessly in debt to the money-lenders. And upon the top of this had come famine and plague. But he most firmly believed that this deplorable condition of things was by no means necessary. With a fine climate and a rich soil, and abundant labour, cheap and skilful, there were all the elements of great agricultural prosperity. All that was wanted was, that the cultivator should be released from the bonds of debt, and supplied with capital for irrigation and manure. Give him this and he would soon turn all India into a garden. (Cheers.) All this was possible, but it was only possible through financial economy, and, as he had already said, that was only possible by means of financial control through the House of Commons. The task was a difficult one, and he doubted whether they realised how difficult it was. In this country the taxpayers were the masters, and controlled the spending departments through their elected representatives. But in India the case was reversed. The spending departments were the masters, and the only duty of the taxpayers was—to pay the taxes. Of all these spending departments the Indian Military Department was the greatest foe to administrative economy, and it had made itself strong in three commanding positions: 1st, at Simla, where it had captured the Viceroy in Council; 2nd, at the India Office at Westminster, where good civilians go when they die; and 3rd, on both Front Benches of the House of Commons, where it was joined by three other foes of Indian economy—the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Treasury, three other spirits worse than the first. How could such a combination be met? And how was financial justice to be got for India? He only knew of one way, and that was by cordial sympathy and combination between the people of this country and the people of India, for this alone would secure an effective control through the House of Commons. Here the partnership would come in effectively. The Indian taxpayer was directly interested in economy, and he had the knowledge of the remedies. On the other hand the British taxpayer had the power to compel the application of the remedies. The Indian taxpayer knew where the shoe pinched. The British taxpayer was the man who selected the shoemaker. Now what were the remedies? The people of India had long been dumb. They had now found a voice, and for the last thirteen years had been trying, respectfully, patiently, and constitutionally to get a hearing through their Indian National Congress. (Cheers.) What were the remedies proposed by the Congress to ensure financial control by the House of Commons? They were contained in Resolution III of the Congress, held last Christmas in the Central Provinces. What was proposed was: (1) that the non-official members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council should have the power to move amendments on the Budget, and divide on them; (2) that representative Indians of position and experience should be appointed to the Council of the Secretary of State on the recommendation of the elected members of the Legislative Councils in India; and (3) that each year the House of Commons should appoint a Select Committee to enquire into and report on Indian finances. Surely these were mild and moderate proposals, going on old and approved lines. If adopted, he believed they would be the first step towards bringing back prosperity to India. No doles would then be either needed or asked for. (Cheers.)

Lord G. HAMILTON: In the few observations I shall have to address to the House I shall keep strictly, according to your ruling, Sir, to the Resolution before us. But I suppose I may be allowed incidentally to allude to the argument on which, to a large extent, that resolution is based—the poverty of the people of India. Nobody disputes that, measured by our standard of comfort, the great mass of the people of India are very poor. But what we have to consider is not whether they are poor but whether their condition under our rule is improving or going back. (Hear, hear.) I am bound to say, although there is much poverty, tested by every criterion which you may apply, whether by statistics or by experience, the condition of the agricultural population of India is, I believe, improving. (Hear, hear.) Now, two hon. gentlemen who have spoken have given pathetic accounts of the terrible condition in which the famine districts are left and the hopeless condition of the country. There is a paper now in the hands of the printers, and which will shortly be distributed to members, dealing with this subject matter, by Sir Antony P. MacDonnell, which I commend for perusal to hon. members as by far the ablest summary of famine operations I have yet read, and it has special importance attached to it, inasmuch as Sir A. MacDonnell is not only the ablest administrator in India but a man of ubiquitous energy who comes into contact with every class of the community—not obtaining his information at second hand—but mixing freely with the people, using his own ears and eyes. His report gives a much more sanguine estimate than I should have been prepared to give. It is concerned with the North-West Provinces, which, with the exception of the Central Provinces, suffered the most severely from famine. Sir A. MacDonnell says, "It would be too early to attempt an estimate of the future effects on the Provinces of the trial, the severest within the century through which they have just passed; but it is possible to observe the unprecedented rapidity with which agriculture is recovering as soon as natural conditions permitted its resumption." Then he goes on to say, "This statement of the existing condition of agriculture goes to show that the people have resumed the usual tenour of their lives with energy, undemoralised by the hardships or the incidents of the preceding year." Further on he adds: "All observers are combined in thinking that the high prices of recent years together with the increased facilities for transport, have enabled the cultivating classes to derive much profit by the sale of their surplus produce. This has added to their wealth and enabled them to improve their general standard of living. How long this improvement will last, how long the surplus which makes it possible will continue to be produced, depends on the growth of population, the progress of agricultural improvement, the maintenance of moderate taxation, and, finally, on the advance of general enlightenment. Into speculations on these interesting subjects the Lieutenant-Governor will not enter now, but he has faith in the future, in the people, and in the equity and resourcefulness of British statesmanship. . . . . The general conclusion, then, which the Lieutenant-Governor is disposed to draw is that the cultivating classes, whether tenants or proprietors, have displayed in this famine a command of resources, either in the shape of capital or credit, and a power of resistance, which have not been paralleled in any previous period of scarcity, but that this improvement has not been materially shared by the labouring classes." Without referring to the vexed questions of currency reform, I am bound to say that the real want of India is capital, and under existing conditions, unquestionably owing to the fluctuations of exchange, there is now a stoppage of the flow of capital from England to India which would be resumed with stability of exchange. It must be borne in mind that although the mass of the people are poor they are very lightly taxed. I think they contribute less in table of comparison with any large population living under anything like a civilised Government.

Mr DAVITT asked in what proportion to income.

Lord G. HAMILTON: Independent of Land Revenue the average contribution is 1s. 8d. Except upon salt and the higher cotton goods the mass do not contribute to taxation at all. I do not say this wishing to minimise the hard conditions under which they live and toil, but I do not think that because a large number of the people of India are poor, that is a sufficient reason why a large sum of money should be voted by the House to India from the taxation of this country. The position we have taken up from the first in regard to the financial situation is one which I think any reasonable Government is bound to maintain. We carefully watched the financial crisis through which the Indian Government has been passing during the past two years, and we let them know, that if they wished for assistance from the Imperial Government, that Government would not be disposed to give unfavourable consideration to such an appeal provided it was attended by certain conditions. The conditions were these, first, they must either show what particular difficulties were preventing them from providing the money to carry them through the crisis, or they must show that there was serious depreciation of credit, or that additional taxation was necessary to maintain future equilibrium between income and expenditure. I think nobody will deny that these are absolutely sound conditions—(hear, hear),—conditions which any Government occupying our place would be bound to adhere to. The Indian Government were unable accurately to forecast their financial position until the close of the last calendar year. At the end of December they sent to her Majesty's Government a forecast of that position. I have heard with some regret expressions which I think fell involuntarily from the mover of this resolution, in which he spoke of cooking and juggling with figures. I do not think those proper expressions to use. (Hear, hear.) I am sure the hon. gentleman did not intend to cause pain by his remarks to Indian officials whose accounts are prepared with the greatest care.

Mr. S. SMITH admitted he had used too strong an expression.

Lord G. HAMILTON: If the hon. gentleman will look at the expenditure, he will find that the forecast with regard to the frontier expeditions is marvellously accurate, the Chitral expedition, undertaken before we came into office, being actually under the estimate. I am pretty confident that the estimate of expenditure which has been given to the House will not be materially exceeded. We received in the month of December a six months' estimate, that is, of course, for the present year 1897-98. Taking the exchange at 1s. 3d. per rupee it shows a deficit of six crores, 63 lakhs of rupees. The figures include 361 lakhs in addition to some sterling expenditure on account of the expeditions to the frontier; 180 lakhs excess expenditure in relief works, and various items which balance one another. Of course a deficit of 663 lakhs is a very large deficit, but unsatisfactory as it is as regards the year to which it relates it is in one sense not unsatisfactory as regards the future. The famine expenditure, which is an extraordinary expenditure, is estimated at 540 lakhs, and, taking the frontier war at 400 lakhs and other extraordinary expenditure at 12 lakhs, we get a total of 952 lakhs. But the total deficit is only 663 lakhs. The normal revenue, therefore, will meet 289 lakhs of the expenditure of this particular year of abnormal expenditure; or, in other words, in a normal year there will probably be a considerable surplus of income over expenditure. (Hear, hear.) Having got these figures we telegraphed to the Indian Government to get more accurate information as regarded the past. We sent the following telegram, "Your telegram of December 7. Budget forecast. Please let me know by telegram for the information of her Majesty's Government whether the present financial condition of India and prospects for coming year are such as to justify anticipation that all necessary expenditure can be met without additional taxation or unduly increasing the indebtedness." To this we received the following reply:—"Financial position. Twenty years' accounts up to March, 1898, show a surplus of ordinary revenue amounting to 45 crores, against extraordinary expenditure on war of 21 crores, famine relief $8\frac{1}{2}$ crores, railway construction, charged to revenue, $13\frac{1}{2}$ crores; showing a net surplus for the 20 years, after meeting these charges, of two crores." They go on to say, without committing themselves to figures, that they are fully confident that a substantial surplus can be forecasted for the next ensuing year, that no additional taxation will be imposed, but that as the examination of the figures both of revenue and expenditure is not complete they do not wish to commit themselves to it. In addition we got this further information from the Indian Government:—"Official telegram to-day succinctly states the facts bearing on the financial position, and warrants our considering external assistance unnecessary." Why, therefore, should we override the Indian Government and force this assistance upon them? There are most conclusive reasons why we should not do so. The hon. gentleman opposite criticised the method of control adopted in India over the expenditure of that Government, and he seemed to indicate that it ought to be controlled in the same way that it was in England. I believe the present system of control over expenditure in India is most efficient. Two years ago I drew a comparison between the growth of expenditure in India during ten years and in this country, and whereas in

India it was almost stationary, in this country it had grown enormously. I really believe that the Indian Government get a better return, or at least as good a return, as the Treasury of this country, for their expenditure. (Hear, hear.) This control over expenditure in India is largely exercised by the personal influence of the Finance Minister. We have an exceptionally strong Finance Minister in Sir James Westland, and I know he agrees strongly in the view of the Indian Government that it is not wise in these conditions to give assistance. I believe the main reason why he is desirous that assistance should not be given is because he is conscious that once it is granted on the ground of sympathy and benevolence—because the case is not argued on the grounds of justice, but simply on the grounds of humanity, benevolence and sympathy—if once this House gets into the practice of giving doles to India on these grounds, the control of the Finance Minister would be gone, so far as expenditure was concerned. (Hear, hear.) Turning from the point of view of sympathy, let us examine the proposition from the point of view of justice. I can understand this House wishing to assist India in defraying some of the military expenditure which has been connected with an expedition which is perhaps more Imperial than Indian, but no one for a moment contends that there was anything Imperial connected with the recent operations on the frontier, which were purely Indian. The late Government sanctioned the expedition to Chitral, and nobody ever suggested that that expenditure should be defrayed by the Imperial Parliament. (Hear, hear.) I hope I have given to the House good reasons why we should not accept this motion, but at the same time I can assure the hon. gentleman that it is with reluctance that I speak against any motion which is prompted by a sympathetic impulse, and which would in any way help India. While I feel that I cannot assent to his proposition, I can assure him and hon. gentlemen on the other side that any practical proposals which can make for the amelioration of the condition of the population of India or for the improvement of the financial position of that country will always meet from me with an appreciative hearing. (Cheers.)

Sir H. Fowler: I am sorry that the noble lord has announced so definitely the decision of her Majesty's Government on this subject. I had hoped from what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said at Bristol, and also from what the noble lord said himself in reply to questions, that they had still an open mind upon this question, and recognised that they had both responsibility to India, and, I think, a responsibility to the people of this country in accurately representing what their general feelings are, which would have induced them to look upon this motion in a favourable spirit, to say the least of it, and to have deferred their final decision until the figures were really before them. I can assure the House and the noble lord that I entirely concur in the opinion he has expressed with reference to the Finance Minister of India. I am sure my hon. friend behind me was betrayed into a mistake when he talked of there not being an honourable Budget in India, and implied some superiority in the Chancellor of the Exchequer, so far as personal honour and honesty were concerned over the present Finance Minister of India. I have had official relations with the one, and I have had the honour of sitting in opposition to the other, and I venture to say that, high as is the standard of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, both for financial ability and for stainless honour in the administration and great responsibilities of his office, the Finance Minister of India is not one whit behind him in any one of these respects, and is as incapable of presenting to the Secretary of State in this House a dishonest or delusive or deceitful Budget as the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be. (Cheers.) The noble lord has told us that the present estimate is that at the end of the present financial year there will be a deficit of six and a-half crores. The extra expenditure of the financial year has been nine and a-half crores, and three crores are to be defrayed out of the normal Indian revenue. Of course, when the time comes for analysing these figures we shall see how much of that has been derived from normal taxation, and how much from a reduction in expenditure owing to the improved rate of exchange. Assuming that there is in India a deficit of six and a-half crores, a large proportion would be due to the famine and a certain proportion to the frontier expedition. I did not quite understand the figures as to the famine; I found it difficult to follow them; but last week there was an official announcement in the *Gazette of India*, which stated what the cost of the famine for the present year will be. In addition to the famine we have had the heavy burden of the frontier war. The noble lord says that this has not been discussed as a question of justice, but simply as one of benevolence. But for myself I am going rather to raise it as a question of justice, not as a dole to India. If it came within the limits of a grant, it would be a grant in aid; it would be recognised on behalf of the Government and Parliament of England at all events as an honourable debt owing to our fellow-subjects in India under exceptional circumstances—a crisis which has contained the elements, perhaps never combined together before, of plague, famine, and war, the war resulting in enormous depression. (Cheers.) In his despatch the noble lord was no doubt correct in saying that he must be satisfied, if any grant is refused, that there must be no increase of taxation. But I do not quite understand what the noble lord meant when he said "there must be no undue pressure with reference to the terms on which they can borrow." I object to their having to borrow at all, though there is no doubt that a very large share of the deficit will be met by borrowing money; and there, I do think, a case arises for this House stepping in and interfering. I think my hon. friend has made exaggerated statements as to the poverty of India. I will assume, and the hon. member for Hull will admit, that India is a poor country. Well, Great Britain is a very rich country, passing through a period of almost unexampled prosperity. (Hear, hear.) I do not wish to anticipate the pleasant announcement which the Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to make in the course of a few weeks as to the almost incredible and enormous surplus which, if the figures given in the *Times* week by week are to be relied upon, he will have to deal with. (Hear, hear.) I think I am not, perhaps, very far wrong when I say that the Budget surpluses for the last three years were not much under 12 millions. I do not think it will be denied that Great Britain is in a position to deal with India with liberality as well as justice. (Hear, hear.) As regards the original expedition, it was the duty of the Government to rescue their officers who were interned at Chitral, and the Government would not have shrunk for one moment from putting every shilling of the expenditure on the Imperial Exchequer if necessary; but to say that the operations and the retention of Chitral were not an Imperial question is what I am unable to follow, for if ever there was an Imperial expenditure, this was one. (Hear, hear.) The people of India have no voice in the decision of the Government, and it is beyond doubt—and I do not think the noble lord will dispute it—that the decision arrived at was on Imperial grounds. Nearly the whole foundation of this policy on the North-Western frontier rests upon Imperial grounds and a good deal upon European politics. (Hear, hear.) Therefore, the people of India, no doubt, have some right to say that this is not an ordinary normal Indian expenditure for Indian purposes. But we can look upon it on broader grounds of statesmanship than even that. First, upon the ground of precedent. This country has never shrunk when any of its co-partners in Europe have been labouring under exceptional suffering from lavishly helping them. We have done it over and over again in Ireland and in several of the colonies, and we have done it in India in the case of the Afghan war. We did that by contributing five millions towards the cost of that war. It is of vital importance to strengthen our friendly relationships with India in order to make the people believe that the House of Commons fairly looks after their interests and represents them to the best of its ability. That consideration of creating a friendly feeling in India ought not to be ignored. It is of advantage to us to get a stronger hold than we have at present on the affections of the people of India, and give to them a stronger belief in what I may call the justice and generosity of this House. My hon. friend said we should be very careful what we say in this House, speeches being like barbed arrows. I must be excused if I say that we should be cautious on both sides. I should be very sorry to hear anything said in this House which would in any way reflect upon or give pain to any native of India. We must be careful not to say anything which reflects on the Government of India. (Ministerial cheers.) Of course there is a small minority in every country which is dissatisfied with the Government under which they live; but I do not think it possible for the minority in India to attack the Government of India on the ground of luxury or debauchery—I think that word was used in the course of the debate—or indifference to the duties they have to discharge. My belief is that there is no body of men, either in Great Britain or in any other country on the face of the earth, who could discharge the difficult duties of the administration of India, the ruling of India, and the defending of India better than the Indian Civil Service (Ministerial cheers); and, though I have said strong words in regard to the policy of the military department of India, and will say them, if necessary, I have no desire to cast unworthy imputations or personal reflections upon them because their views are different from mine. But, nevertheless, these things are said of the Government of India in India. (Hear, hear.) It was my duty during the time I was Secretary of India to read the Native newspapers. I can assure the House that I never knew until I read some of these newspapers what a bad man I was (laughter); what a bad Government I represented; and what a bad House this was (laughter); and when I say "bad" I am using a much milder adjective than was actually employed. (Laughter and "Hear, hear.") This is a feeling which we cannot ignore, which we cannot suppress, and which I doubt it would be wise to suppress (hear, hear); but what I want to do is to give it no justification. (Hear, hear.) I do not want to give those people who are bombarding the best Government that India could have additional ammunition in the refusal of this House to entertain the question whether we should or should not help India in a crisis in which it is clear she will have to borrow and have to add to her debt. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friend behind me also alluded to what he called the extremely heavy taxes on the people of India. He referred to the land revenue, and said that it would arouse great indignation if it were employed in Ireland. All I can say is that if the people of Ireland had had the land revenue system of India for the past 70 years they would not have had one-tenth of the distress or the oppression of which my hon. friends from Ireland constantly complain. My hon. friend said that the rent was raised on the tenant's own improvements. That is impossible, except in direct violation of the law. (Hear, hear.) The law is absolutely clear that no increase of rent is to be laid on the improvements made by the tenant himself or on improvements made by private expenditure. The gross area of land under cultivation in British India is 196,000,000 acres, and the gross rent paid to the Government—for it is not a tax—is Rx. 25,000,000. Grass lands and pasturage are exempt from the rent; it falls only upon cultivated land, and it varies from half a rupee per acre in the Central Provinces to three-fifths of a rupee per acre in the higher country. The large increase in the revenue to which attention has been called is derived solely from building land about Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. On the whole, I should say that the rent revenue represents less than 8 per cent. of the value of the crops. (Hear, hear.) I therefore do not press this motion on the ground that the people of India are oppressed by the land revenue. But I do agree with what has been said about the oppressiveness of the salt duty. I think the salt duty ought to be reduced, and that it ought to be the ambition of every Secretary for India to reduce it. (Hear, hear.) But putting these questions aside, I support the motion on the broad basis that we can afford to do it, and that we ought to do it as a matter of justice to the people of India. It is the almost universal opinion of men of all shades of politics that England should behave wisely, justly, and generously to India; and such a policy would not only be of inestimable value in benefiting India, but in strengthening the relations between this country and the Indian Empire. (Cheers.)

Mr. Maclean said the Secretary for India had based his refusal to

accede to the proposal that England should go to the assistance of India in time of need entirely on the representation of the finance department of India. But he should like to know what representations had been made to the finance department of India before that communication was received from them. (Hear, hear.) It was impossible for the Finance Minister in India to say what would be the outcome of the finances of the year. He gave the finance department every credit for the careful administration of the finances, but the weak point in that department was that the department had no control over the policy of the Government of British India. The responsibility for the frontier war rested primarily with the Viceroy and Council of India, and after them with the Secretary of State. And the House of Commons which placed the noble lord in his present position could not escape from its share of the responsibility. In fact it was the House of Commons which sanctioned the war, and it was therefore most unfair to ask the Indian people to pay for it. (Hear, hear.) There was not a colony throughout the Empire which would be treated in a similar way, and why should an exception be made in the case of India? (Hear, hear.) He sympathised with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the enormous demands which were made on the public purse at the present moment. The right hon. gentleman had to provide millions in order to find a new market for our trade in the mountains of the moon in East Africa ("Hear, hear" and a laugh); he had to provide for another expedition in West Africa and to give a substantial dole to the sugar planters of the West Indies. All these were demands the right hon. gentleman could not deny, because they were pressed on him from quarters he could not resist (hear, hear), but he could assure the right hon. gentleman that India was worth more to us than all those places, and we ought to beware lest we sacrificed the oldest and the best market of the Empire. (Hear, hear.)

The House divided—

For the motion	96
Against	188
Majority against	92

Thursday, February 24.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE NEW LAW OF SEDITION.

WILL THE MEASURES BE DISALLOWED?

Mr. Pickersgill asked the Secretary of State for India whether the Viceroy proposed to declare his assent to the Penal Code Amendment Bill, or to reserve the same for the signification of the pleasure of her Majesty thereon, and, in the latter event, as the Penal Code Amendment Bill and the Criminal Procedure Code Bill were very intimately correlated, would he defer tendering advice to her Majesty respecting the former Bill until after the latter Bill had been disposed of by the Legislative Council of the Viceroy.

Lord G. Hamilton: The Viceroy has not communicated to me his intention with regard to the Bills mentioned in the question, but I have no doubt he will follow the usual course by declaring his assent to them. If he does so, it will still be within the power of the Crown to disallow either or both measures; and, as I have already said in this House, I am quite prepared to be held responsible for any advice which I may think fit to give.

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